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Frontispiece



MAHATMA GANDHI

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**MAHATMA GANDHI'S**  
**SPEECHES AND WRITINGS**

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**SPEECHES AND WRITINGS**  
**OF**  
**MAHATMA GANDHI**

**FOURTH EDITION**

**Rupees Eight**  
**G. A. NATESAN & CO.**  
**MADRAS**



## NOTE

**T**HREE editions of Mahatma Gandhi's Speeches and Writings have been sold out in quick succession and this new omnibus edition is issued in response to a public demand which has been insistent for some years past. Mahatma Gandhi holds a unique position in the public life of this country, not only as the leader of a great political movement, but as a moral and social reformer with an immense following. Nor is his following confined to this country only. Thousands of men and women of different classes and diverse occupations, in the West as well as in the East, have felt the call of his idealism; and thousands more who do not swear by his political or social philosophy, nor own allegiance to his way of life have acknowledged the singular charm of his personality and the profound influence of his thought and example on our generation. To those of his way of thinking he has become an *avatar*, while to others who do not exactly see eye to eye with him he is a force to be reckoned with in the complex life of our civilization.

His speeches and writings, which cover the whole field of his public activity in South Africa and India for over three decades, are naturally as varied and copious as his interests are manifold. They embrace every phase of his life's work—politics, education, economics, ethics, social, and religious reform, and, indeed, touch the entire gamut of human endeavour. To gifts of leadership Mahatma Gandhi adds the gift of words, and no writer of our

time has surpassed him in that supreme faculty—swaying great multitudes by the magic of words—simple, direct, inspiring. His words partake of his character and are strong by virtue of mere simplicity, which is the mark of great minds.

This collection claims to be fairly comprehensive and up-to-date. The chapters are so divided as to cover the Mahatma's varied activities in different periods of life, and the top notes set forth the time and circumstance of the writing or utterance. Select articles from his pen and excerpts from his writings and speeches are also taken from *Young India* and *Navajivan*—the Mahatma's English and Gujarati Weeklies—articles throwing light on the movements of his mind, and forming a running commentary on the leading events of our time. The book is thus of equal interest as history and autobiography.

**THE PUBLISHERS.**

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M. K. GANDHI : as a Law Student in London



M K GANDHI, BAR-AT LAW

# THE SOUTH AFRICAN INDIAN QUESTION

## THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE

The following is the full text of a lecture delivered at the Pachaiyappa's Hall, Madras, on October 26, 1896, by Mr. M. K. Gandhi on the "Grievances of Indian settlers in South Africa". The Hon. Mr. P. Ananda Charlu presided. Resolutions sympathising with the Indian settlers and expressing regret at the action of the Home and Indian Governments in having assented to the Indian Immigration Amendment Bill were passed. Mr. Gandhi said:

Mr. President and Gentlemen,—I am to plead before you this evening for the 100,000 British Indians in South Africa, the land of gold and the seat of the late Jameson Raid. This document will show you (here Mr. Gandhi read a credential from the people of Natal deputing him to plead their cause) that I have been deputed to do so by the signatories to it who profess to represent the 100,000 Indians. A large majority of this number are people from Madras and Bengal. Apart, therefore, from the interest that you would take in them as Indians, you are specially interested in the matter.

South Africa may, for our purposes, be divided into the two self-governing British Colonies of Natal and the Cape of Good Hope, the Crown Colony of Zululand, the Transvaal or the South African Republic, the Orange Free State, the Chartered Territories and the Portuguese Territories comprising Delagoa Bay and Beira.



South Africa is indebted to the Colony of Natal for the presence of the Indian population there. In the year 1860, when in the words of a member of the Natal Parliament, "the existence of the Colony hung in the balance", the Colony of Natal introduced indentured Indians into the Colony. Such immigration is regulated by law, is permissible only to a few favoured States, *e.g.*, Mauritius, Fiji, Jamaica, Straits Settlements, Damarara and other States and is allowed only from Madras and Calcutta. As a result of the immigration, in the words of another eminent Natalian, Mr. Saunders: "Indian immigration brought prosperity, prices rose, people were no longer content to grow or sell produce for a song, they could do better." The sugar and tea industries as well as sanitation and the vegetable and fish supply of the Colony are absolutely dependent on the indentured Indians from Madras and Calcutta. The presence of the indentured Indians about sixteen years ago drew the free Indians in the shape of traders who first went there with a view to supply the wants of their own kith and kin; but afterwards found a very valuable customer in the native of South Africa, called Zulu or Kaffir. These traders are chiefly drawn from the Bombay Memon Mahomedans and, owing to their less unfortunate position, have formed themselves into custodians of the interests of the whole Indian population there. Thus, adversity and identity of interests have united in a compact body the Indians from the three Presidencies and they take pride in calling themselves Indians rather than Madrasees or Bengalees or Gujaratees, except when it is necessary to do so. That however by the way.

These Indians have now spread all over South Africa. Natal which is governed by a Legislative Assembly

consisting of 37 members elected by the voters, a Legislative Council consisting of 11 members nominated by the Governor who represents the Queen, and a movable Ministry consisting of 5 members, contains a European population of 50,000, a native population of 400,000, and an Indian population of 51,000. Of the 51,000 Indians about 16,000 are at present serving their indenture, 30,000 are those that have completed their indenture and are now variously engaged as domestic servants, gardeners, hawkers and petty traders and about 5,000 are those who emigrated to the Colony on their own account and are either traders, shop-keepers, assistants or hawkers. A few are also school-masters, interpreters and clerks.

The self-governing Colony of the Cape of Good Hope has, I believe, an Indian population of about 10,000 consisting of traders, hawkers and labourers. Its total population is nearly 1,500,000 of whom not more than 400,000 are Europeans. The rest are natives of the country and Malaya.

The South African Republic of the Transvaal which is governed by two elective Chambers called the Volksraad and an Executive with the President at its head has an Indian population of 5,000 of whom about 200 are traders with liquidated assets amounting to nearly £100,000. The rest are hawkers and waiters or household servants, the latter being men from this Presidency. Its white population is estimated at roughly 120,000 and the Kaffir population at roughly 650,000. This Republic is subject to the Queen's suzerainty. And there is a convention between Great Britain and the Republic which secures the property, trading and farming right of all persons other than natives of South Africa in common with the citizens of the Republic.

The other States have no Indian population to speak of, because of the grievances and disabilities except the Portuguese territories which contain a very large Indian population and which do not give any trouble to the Indians.

The grievances of the Indians in South Africa are twofold, *i.e.*, those that are due to the popular ill-feeling against the Indians and, secondly, the legal disabilities placed upon them. To deal with the first, the Indian is the most hated being in South Africa. Every Indian without distinction is contemptuously called a "coolie". He is also called "Sarny", "Ramasawmy", anything but "Indian". Indian school-masters are called "coolie school-masters". Indian store-keepers are "coolie store-keepers". Two Indian gentlemen from Bombay: Messrs. Dada Abdulla and Moos Hajee Cassim own steamers. Their steamers are "coolie ships".

There is a very respectable firm of Madras traders by name, A. Colandaveloo Pillay & Co. They have built a large block of buildings in Durban, these buildings are called "coolie stores" and the owners are "coolie owners". And I can assure you, gentlemen, that there is as much difference between the partners of that firm and a "coolie" as there is between any one in this hall and a coolie. The railway and tram-officials, in spite of the contradiction that has appeared in official quarters which I am going to deal with presently, I repeat, treat us as beasts. We cannot safely walk on the foot-paths. A Madrassi gentleman, spotlessly dressed, always avoids the footpaths of prominent streets in Durban for fear he should be insulted or pushed off.

We are the "Asian dirt" to be "heartily cursed", we are "chokeful of vice" "and we live upon rice", we are

"stinking coolies" living on "the smell of an oiled rage", we are "the black vermin", we are described in the Statute Books as "semi-barbarous Asiatics, or persons belonging to the uncivilised races of Asia". We "breed like rabbits" and a gentleman at a meeting lately held in Durban said he "was sorry we could not be shot like them". There are coaches running between certain places in the Transvaal. We may not sit inside them. It is a sore trial, apart from the indignity it involves and contemplates, to have to sit outside them either in deadly winter morning, for the winter is severe in the Transvaal, or under a burning sun, though we are Indians. The hotels refuse us admission. Indeed, there are cases in which respectable Indians have found it difficult even to procure refreshments at European places. It was only a short time ago that a gang of Europeans set fire to an Indian store in a village (*cries of shame*) called Dundee in Natal, doing some damage, and another gang threw burning crackers into the Indian stores in a business street in Durban. This feeling of intense hatred has been reproduced into legislation in the various States of South Africa restricting the freedom of Indians in many ways. To begin with, Natal, which is the most important from an Indian point of view, has of late shown the greatest activity in passing Indian legislation. Till 1894, the Indians had been enjoying the franchise equally with the Europeans under the general franchise law of the Colony, which entitles any adult male being a British subject to be placed on the voters' list, who possesses immoveable property worth £50 or pays an annual rent of £10. There is a separate franchise qualification for the Zulu. In 1894, the Natal Legislature passed a Bill disfranchising Asiatics by name. We resisted it in the Local Parliament

but without any avail. We then memorialised the Secretary of State for the Colonies, and as a result that Bill was this year withdrawn and replaced by another which, though not quite so bad as the first one, is bad enough. It says that no natives of countries (not of European origin) which have not hitherto possessed elective representative institutions, founded on the Parliamentary Franchise, shall be placed on the voters' roll unless they shall first obtain an exemption from the Governor-in-Council. This Bill excepts from its operation those whose names are already rightly contained in any voters' list. Before being introduced it was submitted to Mr. Chamberlain who has approved of it. We have opposed it on the ground that we have such institutions in India, and that, therefore, the Bill will fail in its object if it is to disfranchise the Asiatics and that therefore also it is a harassing piece of legislation and is calculated to involve us in endless litigation and expense. This is admitted on all hands. The very members who voted for it thought likewise. The Natal Government organ says in effect:

We know India has such institutions and therefore the Bill will not apply to the Indians. But we can have that bill or none. If it disfranchises Indians, nothing can be better. If it does not, then too we have nothing to fear! For the Indian can never gain political supremacy and if necessary, we can soon impose an educational test or raise the property qualification which, while disfranchising Indians wholesale, will not debar a single European from voting.

Thus the Natal legislature is paying a game of "toss up" at the Indians' expense. We are a fit subject for vivisection under the Natal Pasteur's deadly scalpel and knife, with this difference between the Paris Pasteur and the Natal Pasteur that, while the former indulged in vivisection with the object of benefiting humanity, the latter has been indulging in it for the sake of amusement out of sheer wantonness. The object of this measure is not

## THE BEGINNING OF THE STRUGGLE

political. It is purely and simply to degrade the Indians in the words of a member of the Natal Parliament: "To make the Indian's life more comfortable in his native land than in Natal;" in the words of another eminent Natalian: "To keep him for ever a hewer of wood and drawer of water." The very fact that at present there are only 250 Indians as against nearly 10,000 European voters shows that there is no fear of the Indian vote swamping the European. For a fuller history of the question, I must refer you to the Green Pamphlet. The London *Times* which has uniformly supported us in our troubles, dealing with the franchise question in Natal, thus puts it in its issue of the 27th day of June of this year:

The question now put before Mr. Chamberlain is not an academic one. It is not a question of argument but of race feeling. We cannot afford a war of races among our own subjects. It would be a wrong for the Government of India to suddenly arrest the development of Natal by shutting all the supply of immigrants, as it would be for Natal to deny the right of citizenship to British Indian subjects who, by years of thrift and good work in the Colony, have raised themselves to the actual status of citizens.

If there is any real danger of the Asiatic vote swamping the European, we should have no objection to an educational test being imposed or the property qualifications being raised. What we object to is class legislation and the degradation which it necessarily involves. We are fighting for no new privilege in opposing the Bill, we are resisting the deprivation of the one we have been enjoying.

In strict accordance with the policy of degrading the Indian to the level of a raw Kaffir and, in the words of the Attorney-General of Natal, "that of preventing him from forming part of the future South African

nation that is going to be built," the Natal Government last year introduced their Bill to amend the Indian Immigration Law which, I regret to inform you, has received the Royal sanction in spite of our hopes to the contrary. This news was received after the Bombay meeting, and it will, therefore, be necessary for me to deal with this question at some length, also because this question more immediately affects this Presidency and can be best studied here. Up to the 18th day of August, 1894, the indentured immigrants went under a contract of service for five years in consideration for a free passage to Natal, free board and lodging for themselves and their families and wages at the rate of ten shillings per month for the first year to be increased by one shilling every following year. They were also entitled to a free passage back to India if they remained in the Colony another five years as free labourers. This is now changed and, in future, the immigrants will have either to remain in the Colony for ever under indenture, their wages increasing to 20 shillings at the end of the 9th year of indentured service, or to return to India or to pay an annual poll-tax of £3 sterling equivalent to nearly half a year's earnings on the indentured scale. A Commission consisting of two members was sent to India in 1893 by the Natal Government to induce the Indian Government to agree to the above alterations with the exception of the imposition of the poll-tax. The present Viceroy, while expressing his reluctance, agreed to the alteration subject to the sanction of the Home Government, refusing to allow the Natal Government to make the breach of the clause about compulsory return a criminal offence. The Natal Government have got over the difficulty by the poll-tax clause.

The Attorney-General in discussing that clause said that while an Indian could not be sent to gaol for refusing to return to India or to pay the tax, so long as there was anything worth having in his hut, it will be liable to seizure. We strongly opposed that Bill in the local parliament and failing there, sent a memorial to Mr. Chamberlain, praying either that the Bill should be disallowed or emigration to Natal should be suspended.

The above proposal was mooted 10 years ago and it was vehemently opposed by the most eminent colonists in Natal. A Commission was then appointed to inquire into various matters concerning Indians in Natal. One of the Commissioners, Mr. Saunders, says in his additional report :

Though the Commission has made no recommendation on the subject of passing a law to force Indians back to India at the expiration of their term of service unless they renew their indentures, I wish to express my strong condemnation of any such idea, and I feel convinced that many who now advocate the plan, when they realise what it means, will reject it as energetically as I do. Stop Indian emigration and face results, but don't try to do what I can show is a great wrong.

What is it but taking the best of our servants (the good as well as the bad), and then refusing them the enjoyment of the reward, forcing them back (if we could, but we cannot) when their best days have been spent for our benefit. Where to? Why back to face a prospect of starvation from which they sought to escape when they were young. Shylock-like, taking the pound of flesh, and Shylock-like we may rely on it meeting Shylock's reward.

The Colony can stop Indian immigration, and that, perhaps, far more easily and permanently than some 'popularity seekers' would desire. But force men off at the end of their service, this the Colony cannot do. And I urge on it not to discredit a fair name by trying.

The Attorney-General of Natal who introduced the Bill under discussion, expressed the following views while giving his evidence before the Commission :

With reference to time-expired Indians, I do not think that it ought to be compulsory on any man to go to any part of the world save for a crime for which he is transported. I hear a great deal



of this question ; I have been asked again and again to take a different view, but I have not been able to do it. A man is brought here, *in theory with his own consent in practice very often without his consent*, he gives the best five years of his life, he forms new ties, forgets the old ones, perhaps establishes home here, and he cannot, according to my view of right and wrong, be sent back. Better by far to stop the further introduction of Indians altogether than to take what work you can out of them and order them away. The Colony, or part of the Colony, seems to want Indians but also wishes to avoid the consequences of Indian immigration. The Indian people do no harm as far as I know : in certain respects they do a great deal of good. I have never heard a reason to justify the extradition of a man who has behaved well for five years.

And Mr. Binns who came to India as one of the Natal Commissioners to induce the Indian Government to agree to the above-mentioned alterations, gave the following evidence before the Commission ten years ago :

I think the idea which has been mooted, that all Indians should be compelled to return to India at the end of their term of indenture, is most unfair to the Indian population and would never be sanctioned by the Indian Government. In my opinion the free Indian population is a most useful section of the community.

But then great men may change their views as often and as quickly as they may change their clothes with impunity and even to advantage. In them, they say, such changes are a result of sincere conviction. It is a thousand pities, however, that unfortunately for the poor indentured Indian his fear or rather the expectation that the Indian Government will never sanction the change was not realised.

The London *Star* thus gave vent to its feelings on reading the Bill :

These particulars are enough to throw light upon the hateful persecution to which British Indian subjects are being subjected. The new Indian Immigration Law Amendment Bill which virtually proposes to reduce Indians to a state of slavery, is another example. The thing is a monstrous wrong, an insult to British subjects, a disgrace to its authors, and a slight upon ourselves. Every Englishman is concerned to see that the commercial greed of the South African trader is not permitted to wreak such bitter injustice upon men who alike by proclamation and by statute are placed upon an equality with ourselves before the Law.

The *London Times* also in supporting our prayer has compared the state of perpetual indenture to a "state perilously near to slavery". It also says :

The Government of India has one simple remedy. It can suspend indentured immigration to South Africa as it has suspended such immigration to foreign possessions until it obtains the necessary guarantees for the present well-being and the future status of the immigrants. . . . It is eminently a case for sensible and conciliatory action on both sides. . . . But the Indian Government may be forced to adopt measures in connection with the wider claim now being urged by every section of the Indian community and which has been explicitly acknowledged by Her Majesty's Government at home, namely, the claim of the Indian races to trade and to labour with the full status of British subjects throughout the British Empire and in allied States.

The letters } from Natal informing me of the Royal sanction to this Bill ask me to request the Indian public to help us } to get emigration suspended. I am well aware that the idea of suspending emigration requires careful consideration. I humbly think that there is no other conclusion possible in the interests of the Indians at large. Emigration is supposed to relieve the congested districts and to benefit those who emigrate. If the Indians, instead of paying the poll-tax, return to India the congestion cannot be affected at all. And the returned Indians will rather be a source of difficulty than anything else as they must necessarily find it difficult to get work and cannot be expected to bring sufficient to live upon the interest of their capital. It certainly will not benefit the emigrants as they will never, if the Government can possibly help it, be allowed to rise higher than the status of labourers. The fact is that they are being helped on to degradation.

Under such circumstances I humbly ask you to support our prayer to suspend emigration to Natal, unless the new law can be altered or repealed. You will naturally be anxious to know the treatment of the

Indians while under indenture. Of course, that life cannot be bright under any circumstances; but I do not think their lot is worse than the lot of the Indians similarly placed in other parts of the world. At the same time they too certainly come in for a share of the tremendous colour prejudice. I can only briefly allude to the matter here and refer to the curious Green Pamphlet wherein it has been more fully discussed. There is a sad mortality from suicides on certain estates in Natal. It is very difficult for an indentured Indian to have his services transferred on the ground of ill-treatment. An indentured Indian after he becomes free is given a free pass. This he has to show whenever asked to do so. It is meant to detect desertion by the indentured Indians. The working of this system is a source of much irritation to poor free Indians and often puts respectable Indians in a very unpleasant position. This law really would not give any trouble but for the unreasonable prejudice. A sympathetic Protector of Immigrants, preferably an Indian gentleman of high standing and knowing the Tamil, Telugu and Hindustani languages, would certainly mitigate the usual hardships of the indentured life. An Indian immigrant who loses his free pass is, as a rule, called upon to pay £3 sterling for a duplicate copy. This is nothing but a system of blackmail.

The 9 o'clock rule in Natal which makes it necessary for every Indian to carry a pass if he wants to be out after 9 P.M. at the pain of being locked up in a dungeon, causes much heart-burning, especially among the gentlemen from this Presidency. You will be pleased to hear that children of many indentured Indians receive a pretty good education and then wear, as a rule, the European dress.

They are a most sensitive class and yet unfortunately most liable to arrest under the 9 o'clock rule. The European dress for an Indian is no recommendation in Natal. It is rather the reverse. For the flowing robe of a Memon frees the wearer from such molestation. A happy incident described in the Green Pamphlet led the police in Durban some years ago to free Indians thus dressed from liability to arrest after 9 P.M. A Tamil school-mistress, a Tamil school-master and a Tamil Sunday school-teacher were only a few months ago arrested and locked up under this law. They all got justice in the law courts but that was a poor consolation. The result, however, was that the Corporations in Natal are clamouring for an alteration in the law so that it might be impossible for such Indians to get off scot-free in the law courts.

There is a bye-law in Durban which requires registration of coloured servants. This rule may be and perhaps is necessary for the Kaffirs who would not work, but absolutely useless with regard to the Indians. But the policy is to class the Indian with the Kaffir whenever possible.

This does not complete the list of grievances in Natal. I must beg to refer the curious to the Green Pamphlet for further information.

But, gentlemen, you have been told lately by the Natal Agent-General that the Indians are nowhere better treated than in Natal; that the fact that a majority of the indentured labourers do not avail themselves of the return passage is the best answer to my pamphlet, and that the railway and tram-car officials do not treat the Indians as beasts nor do the law courts deny them justice.

With the greatest deference to the Agent-General, all I can say as to the first statement is that he must have

very queer notions of good treatment, if to be locked up for being out after 9 P.M. without a pass, to be denied the most elementary right of citizenship in a free country, to be denied a higher status than that of bondman and at best a free labourer and to be subjected to other restrictions referred to above, are instances of good treatment. And if such treatment is the best the Indians receive throughout the world, then the lot of the Indians in other parts of the world and here must be very miserable indeed, according to the commonsense view. The thing is that Mr. Walter Peace, the Agent-General, is made to look through the official spectacles and to him everything official is bound to appear rosy. The legal disabilities are condemnatory of the action of the Natal Government and how can the Agent-General be expected to condemn himself? If he or the Government which he represents only admitted that the legal disabilities mentioned above were against the fundamental principles of the British Constitution, I should not stand before you this evening. I respectfully submit that statements of opinions made by the Agent-General cannot be allowed to have greater weight than those of an accused person about his own guilt.

The fact that the indentured Indians as a rule do not avail themselves of the return passage we do not dispute, but we certainly dispute that it is the best answer to our complaints. How can that fact disprove the existence of the legal disabilities? It may prove that the Indians who do not take advantage of the return passage either do not mind the disabilities or remain in the Colony in spite of such disabilities. If the former be the case, it is the duty of those who know better to make the Indians realise their situation and to enable them to see that submission to them

means degradation. If the latter be the case, it is one more instance of the patience and the forbearing spirit of the Indian Nation which was acknowledged by Mr. Chamberlain in his Despatch in connection with the Transvaal arbitration. Because they hear them is no reason why the disabilities should not be removed or why they should be interpreted into meaning the best treatment possible.

Moreover who are these people who, instead of returning to India, settle in the Colony? They are the Indians drawn from the poorest classes and from the most thickly populated districts possibly living in a state of semi-starvation in India. They migrated to Natal with their families, if any, with the intention of settling there if possible. Is it any wonder, if these people after the expiry of their indenture, instead of running 'to face semi-starvation', as Mr. Saunders has put it, settled in a country where the climate is magnificent and where they may earn a decent living? A starving man generally would stand any amount of rough treatment to get a crumb of bread.

Do not the Uitlanders make out a terribly long list of grievances in the Transvaal? And yet do they not flock to the Transvaal in thousands in spite of the ill-treatment they receive there, because they can earn their bread in the Transvaal more easily than in the old country?

This, too, should be borne in mind that in making his statement, Mr. Peace has not taken into account the free Indian trader who goes to the Colony on his own account and who feels most the indignities and disabilities. If it does not do to tell the Uitlander that he may not go to the Transvaal if he cannot bear the ill-treatment, much less will it do to say so to the enterprising Indian. We belong to the Imperial family and are children, adopted it may be, of the same august mother, having the same rights and

privileges guaranteed to us as to the European children. It was in that belief that we went to the Colony of Natal and we trust that our belief was well founded.

The Agent-General has contradicted the statement made in the pamphlet that the railway and tram-car officials treat the Indians as beasts. Even if the statements I have made were incorrect, that would not disprove the legal disabilities which and which alone have been made the subject of memorials and to remove which we invoke the direct intervention of the Home and the Indian Governments. But I venture to say that the Agent-General has been misinformed and beg to repeat that the Indians are treated as beasts by the railway and the tram-car officials. That statement was made now nearly two years ago in quarters where it could have been contradicted at once. I had the honour to address an 'open letter' to the members of the Local Parliament in Natal. It was widely circulated in the Colony and noticed by almost every leading newspaper in South Africa. No one contradicted it then. It was even admitted by some newspapers. Under such circumstances I ventured to quote it in my pamphlet published here. I am not given to exaggerate matters and it is very unpleasant to me to have to cite testimony in my own favour, but since an attempt has been made to discredit my statements and thereby the cause I am advocating, I feel it to be my duty, for the sake of the cause, to tell you what the papers in South Africa thought about the 'open letter' in which the statement was made.

The *Star*, the leading newspaper in Johannesburg, says:

Mr. Gandhi writes forcibly, moderately and well. He has himself suffered some slight measure of injustice since he came

into the Colony, but that fact does not seem to have coloured his sentiment, and it must be confessed that to the tone of the open letter no objection can reasonably be taken. Mr. Gandhi discusses the questions he has raised with conspicuous moderation.

The *Natal Mercury*, the Government organ in Natal, says :

Mr. Gandhi writes with calmness and moderation. He is as imperial as any one could expect him to be and probably a little more so than might have been expected, considering that he did not receive very just treatment at the hands of the Law Society when he first came to the Colony.

Had I made unfounded statements, the newspapers would not have given such a certificate to the 'open letter'.

An Indian, about two years ago, took out a second class ticket on the Natal railway. In a single night journey he was thrice disturbed and was twice made to change compartments to please European passengers. The case came before the Court and the Indian got £10 damages. The following is the plaintiff's evidence in the case :

Deponent got into a second class carriage in the train, leaving Charlestown at 1-30 p.m. Three other Indians were in the same compartment, but they got out at New Castle. A white man opened the door of the compartment and beckoned to witness, saying: "Come out, Sammy". Plaintiff asked: "Why," and the white man replied: "Never mind, come out, I want to place someone here." Witness said: "Why should I come out from here when I have paid my fare?" . . . The white man then left and brought an Indian who, witness believed, was in the employ of the railway. The Indian was told to tell plaintiff to get out of the carriage. Thereupon the Indian said: "The white man orders you to come out and you must come out." The Indian then left. Witness said to the white man: "What do you want to shift me about for I have paid my fare and have a right to remain here." The white man became angry at this and said: "Well, if you don't come out, I will knock hell out of you." The white man got into the carriage and laid hold of witness by the arm and tried to pull him out. Plaintiff said: "Let me alone and I will come out." The witness left the carriage and the white man pointed out another second class compartment and told him to go there. Plaintiff did as he was directed. The compartment he was shown into was empty. He believed some people who were playing a



band were put into the carriage iron, which he was expelled. This white man was the District Superintendent of Railways at New-castle. (*Shame*) To proceed, witness travelled undisturbed to Maritzberg. He fell asleep and when he awoke at Maritzberg he found a white man, a white woman and a child in the compartment with him. A white man came up to the carriage and said: "Is that your boy, speaking to the white man in the compartment?" Witness's fellow-traveller replied: "Yes," pointing to his little boy. The other white man then said: "No. I don't mean him. I mean the damned coolie in the corner." This gentleman with the choice language was a railway official, being a shunter. The white man in the compartment replied: "Oh, never mind him, leave him alone." Then the white man outside (the official) said: "I am not going to allow a coolie to be in the same compartment with white people." This man addressed plaintiff, saying: "Sammy, come out." Plaintiff said: "Why, I was removed at New Castle to this compartment." The white man said: "Well you must come out" and was about to enter the carriage. Witness thinking he would be handled as at New Castle, said he would go out and left the compartment. The white man pointed out another second class compartment which witness entered. This was empty for a time but before leaving, a white man entered. Another white man, (the official), afterwards came up and said: "If you don't like to travel with that stinking coolie, I will find you another carriage." (*The Natal Advertiser*, 22nd November, 1893.)

You will have noticed that the official at Maritzberg mal-treated the Indian passenger although his white fellow-passenger did not mind him. If this is not bestial treatment, I should very much like to know what is, and such occurrences take place often enough to be irritating.

It was found during the case that one of the witnesses for the defendant was coached. In answer to a question from the Bench whether the Indian passengers were treated with consideration, the witness who was one of the officials referred to, replied in the affirmative. Thereupon the presiding Magistrate who tried the case is reported to have said to the witness: "Then you have a different opinion to what I have and it is a curious thing that people who are not connected with the railway observe more than you."

The *Natal Advertiser*, a European daily in Durban, made the following remarks on the case

It was indisputable from the evidence that the Arab had been badly treated and seeing that second class tickets are issued to Indians of this description, the plaintiff ought not to have been subjected to unnecessary annoyance and indignity. . . . . Some definite measures should be taken to minimise the danger of trouble arising between European and coloured passengers without rendering the carrying out of such measures annoying to any person whether black or white.

In the course of its remarks on the same case the *Natal Mercury* observed:

There is throughout South Africa a tendency to treat all Indians as coolies pure and simple, no matter whether they be educated and cleanly in their habits or not. . . . On our railways we have noticed on more than one occasion that coloured passengers are not by any means treated with civility, and although it would be unreasonable to expect that the white employees of the N.G.R. should treat them with the same deference as is accorded to European passengers, still we think it would not be in any way derogatory to their dignity if the officials were a little more *suaavior in modo* when dealing with coloured travellers.

The *Cape Times*, a leading newspaper in South Africa, says:

Natal presents the curious spectacle of a country entertaining a supreme contempt for the very class of people she can least do without. Imagination can only picture the commercial paralysis which would inevitably attend the withdrawal of the Indian population from that Colony. And yet the Indian is the most despised of creatures, he may not ride in the tram-cars, nor sit in the same compartment of a railway carriage with the Europeans, hotel-keepers refuse him food or shelter and he is denied the privilege of the public bath!

Here is the opinion of an Anglo-Indian, Mr. Drummond who is intimately connected with the Indians in Natal. He says, writing to the *Natal Mercury*:

The majority of the people here seem to forget that they are British subjects, that their Maharani is our Queen and for that reason alone one would think that they might be spared the opprobrious term of 'coolie' as it is here applied. In India it is only the lower class of white men who calls native a 'nigger' and treats him as if he were unworthy of any consideration or respect. In their eyes, as in the eyes of many in this colony, he is treated

either as a heavy burden or a mechanical machine. . . . It is a common thing and a lamentable thing to hear the ignorant and the unenlightened speak of the Indian generally as the scum of the earth, etc. It is depreciation from the white man and not appreciation that they get. .

I think I have adduced sufficient outside testimony to substantiate my statement that the railway officials treat the Indians as beasts. On the tram-cars, the Indians are often not allowed to sit inside but are sent 'upstairs', as the phrase goes. They are often made to remove from one seat to another or prevented from occupying front benches. I know an Indian officer, a Tamil gentleman, dressed in the latest European style who was made to stand on the tram-car board although there was accommodation available for him.

Quoting statistics to prove the prosperity of the Indian community is quite unnecessary. It is not denied that the Indians who go to Natal do earn a living and that in spite of the persecution.

In the Transvaal we cannot own landed property, we may not trade or reside except in specified locations which are described by the British Agent "as places to deposit the refuse of the town without any water except the polluted soakage in the gully between the location and the town". We may not as of right walk on the footpaths in Johannesburg and Pretoria, we may not be out after 9 P.M. We may not travel without passes. The law prevents us from travelling first or second class on the railways. We are required to pay a special registration fee of £3 to enable us to settle in the Transvaal, and though we are treated as mere "chattels" and have no privileges whatever, we may be called upon to render compulsory military service, if Mr. Chamberlain disregards the Memorial which we have addressed to him on the subject. The history of

the whole case as it affects the Indians in the Transvaal is very interesting, and I am only sorry that for want of time I cannot deal with it now. I must, however, beg you to study it from the Green Pamphlet. I must not omit to mention that it is criminal for an Indian to buy native gold.

The Orange Free State has made "the British Indian an impossibility by simply classifying him with the Kaffir," as its chief organ puts it. It has passed a special law whereby we are prevented from trading, farming or owning property under any circumstances. If we submit to these degrading conditions, we may be allowed to reside after passing through certain humiliating ceremonies. We were driven out from the State and our stores were closed causing to us a loss of £9,000. And this grievance remains absolutely without redress. The Cape Parliament has passed a Bill granting the East London Municipality in that Colony the power to frame bye-laws prohibiting Indians from walking on the footpaths and making them live in locations. It has issued instructions to the authorities of East Griqualand not to issue any trading licences to the Indians. The Cape Government are in communication with the Home Government with a view to induce them to sanction legislation restricting the influx of the Asiatics. The people in the Chartered territories are endeavouring to close the country against the Asiatic trader. In Zululand, a Crown Colony, we cannot own or acquire landed property in the townships of Eshowe and Nondweni. This question is now before Mr. Chamberlain for consideration. As in the Transvaal there also it is criminal for an Indian to buy native gold.

Thus we are hemmed in on all sides by restrictions. And if nothing further were to be done here and in England on our behalf, it is merely a question of time when the

respectable Indian in South Africa will be absolutely extinct.

Nor is this merely a local question. It is as the London *Times* puts it, "that of the status of the British Indian outside India". "If," says the *Thunderer*, "they fail to secure that position (that is of equal status), in South Africa, it will be difficult for them to attain it elsewhere." I have no doubt you have read in the papers that Australian Colonies have passed legislation to prevent Indians from settling in that part of the World. It will be interesting to know how the Home Government deal with that question.

The real cause of all this prejudice may be expressed in the words of the leading organ in South Africa, namely, the *Cape Times*, when it was under the editorship of the prince of South African journalists, Mr. St. Leger :

It is the position of these merchants which is productive of no little hostility to this day. And it is in considering their position that their rivals in trade have sought to inflict upon them through the medium of the State what looks on the face of it something very like an injustice for the benefit of self.

Continues the same organ :

The injustice to the Indian is so glaring that one is almost ashamed of one's countrymen in wishing to have these men treated as native (i.e., of South Africa), simply because of their success in trade. The very reason that they have been so successful against the dominant race is sufficient to raise them above that degrading level.

If this was true in 1889 when the above was written, it is doubly so now, because the legislators of South Africa have shown phenomenal activity in passing measures restricting the liberty of the Queen's Indian subjects. Other objections also have been raised to our presence there, but they will not bear scrutiny and I have dealt with them in the Green Pamphlet. I venture, however, to quote from the *Natal Advertiser* which states one of

them and prescribes a statesman-like remedy also. And so far as the objection may be valid, we are in perfect accord with the *Advertiser's* suggestion. This paper which is under European management was at one time violently against us. Dealing with the whole question from an Imperial standpoint, it concludes :

It will, therefore, probably yet be found that the removal of the drawbacks at present incidental to the immigration of Indians into British Colonies is not to be effected so much by the adoption of an obsolete policy of exclusion as by an enlightened and progressive application of ameliorating laws to those Indians who settle in them. One of the chief objections to Indians is that they do not live in accordance with European rules. The remedy for this is to gradually raise their mode of life by compelling them to live in better dwellings and by creating among them new wants. It will probably be found easier because, more in accord with the great onward movements of mankind, to demand of such settlers that they shall rise to their new conditions than to endeavour to maintain the *status quo ante* by their entire exclusion.

We believe also that much of the ill-feeling is due to the want of proper knowledge in South Africa about the Indians in India. We are, therefore, endeavouring to educate public opinion in South Africa by imparting the necessary information. With regard to the legal disabilities we have tried to influence in our favour the public opinion both in England and here. As you know both the Conservatives and Liberals have supported us in England without distinction. The *London Times* has given eight leading articles to our cause in a very sympathetic spirit. This alone has raised us a step higher in the estimation of Europeans in South Africa and has considerably affected for the better the tone of newspapers there. The British Committee of the Congress has been working for us for a very long time. Ever since he entered Parliament, Mr. Buxton has been pleading our cause in season and out of season. Says one of our best sympathisers in London :

The wrong is so serious that it has only to be known in order I hope to be remedied. I feel it my duty on all occasions and in all suitable ways to insist that the Indian subjects of the Crown should enjoy the full status of British subject throughout the whole British Empire and in allied States. This is the position which you and our Indian friends in South Africa should firmly take up. In such a question compromise is impossible. For any compromise would relinquish the fundamental right of the Indian races to the complete status of British subjects—a right which they have earned by their loyalty in peace and by their services in war, a right which was solemnly guaranteed to them by the Queen's Proclamation in 1857 and which has now been explicitly recognised by Her Majesty's Government.

Says the same gentleman in another letter :

I have great hopes that justice will in the end be done. You have a good cause. . . . You have only to take up your position strongly in order to be successful. That position is that the British Indian subjects in South Africa are alike in our own Colonies and in independent friendly States being deprived of their status as British subjects guaranteed to them by the Sovereign and the British Parliament.

An ex-Liberal member of the House of Commons says :

You are infamously treated by the Colonial Government and you will be so treated by the Home Government if they do not compel the Colonies to alter their policy.

A Conservative member says :

I am quite aware that the situation is surrounded with many difficulties; but some points stand out clear and, as far as I can make out it is true to say that breaches of what in India is a civil contract are punishable in South Africa as though they were criminal offences. This is beyond doubt contrary to the principles of the Indian Code and seems to me an infringement of the privileges guaranteed to British subjects in India. Again it is perfectly evident that in the Boer republic and possibly in Natal it is the direct obvious intention of the Government to "hunt" natives of India and to compel them to carry on their business under degrading conditions. The excuses which are put forward to defend the infringements of the liberties of British subjects in the Transvaal are too flimsy to be worth a moment's attention. Yet another Conservative member says : "Your activity is praiseworthy and demands justice. I am, therefore, willing to help you as far as lies in my power."

Such is the sympathy evoked in England. Here, too, I know we have the same sympathy, but I humbly think

that our cause may occupy your attention still more largely.

What is required in India has been well put by the *Moslem Chronicle* in a forcibly written leader :

What with a strong and intelligent public opinion here and a well meaning Government, the difficulties we have to contend with are not at all commensurate with those that retard the well-being of our countrymen in that country. It is therefore quite time that all public bodies should at once turn their attention to this important subject to create an intelligent public opinion with a view to organise an agitation for the removal of the grievances under which our brethren are labouring. Indeed, these grievances have become and are day by day becoming so unbearable and offensive that the requisite agitation cannot be taken up one day too soon.

I may state our position a little more clearly. We are aware that the insults and indignities that we are subjected to at the hands of the populace cannot be directly removed by the intervention of the Home Government. We do not appeal to it for any such intervention. We bring them to the notice of the public so that the fair-minded of all communities and the Press may be expressing their disapproval, materially reduce their rigour and possibly eradicate them ultimately. But we certainly do appeal, and we hope not vainly, to the Home Government for protection against reproduction of such ill-feeling in legislation. We certainly beseech the Home Government to disallow all the Acts of the Legislative bodies of the Colonies restricting our freedom in any shape or form. And this brings me to the last question, namely, how far can the Home Government interfere with such action on the part of the Colonies and the allied States. As for Zululand there can be no question, since it is a Crown Colony directly governed from Downing Street through a Governor. It is not a self-governing or a responsibly-governed Colony as the Colonies of Natal and the Cape of Good Hope are. With regard to the last two, their



Constitution Act provides that Her Majesty may disallow any Act of the Local Parliament within two years even after it has become law having received the Governor's assent. That is one safeguard against oppressive measures by the Colonies. The Royal instructions to the Governor as also the Constitution Act enumerate certain Bills which cannot be assented to by the Governor without Her Majesty's previous sanction. Among such are Bills which have for their object class legislation, such as the Franchise Bill or Immigration Bill. Her Majesty's intervention is thus direct and precise. While it is true that the Home Government is slow to interfere with the Acts of the Colonial Legislatures, there are instances where it has not hesitated to put its foot down on occasions less urgent than the present one. As you are aware, the repeal of the first Franchise Bill was due to such wholesome intervention. What is more the Colonists are ever afraid of it. And as a result of the sympathy expressed in England and the sympathetic answer given by Mr. Chamberlain to the Deputation that waited on him some months ago, most of the papers in South Africa, at any rate in Natal, have veered round considerably. As to the Transvaal there is the convention. As to the Orange Free State, I can only say that it is an unfriendly act on the part of a friendly State to shut her doors against any portion of Her Majesty's subjects. And as such I humbly think it can be effectively checked.

It may not be amiss to quote a few passages from the London *Times* articles bearing on the question of intervention as well as the whole question generally:

The whole question resolves itself into this. Are Her Majesty's Indian subjects to be treated as a degraded and an outcaste race by a friendly Government or are they to have the same rights and status as other British subjects enjoy? Are leading Muhammadan merchants who might sit in the Legislative Council at Bombay, to

be liable to indignities and outrages in the South African Republic? We are continually telling our Indian subjects that the economic future of their country depends on their ability to spread themselves out and to develop their foreign trade. What answer can our Indian Government give them if it fails to secure to them the same protection abroad which is secured to the subjects of every other dependency of the Crown?

It is a mockery to urge our Indian fellow-subjects to embark on external commerce if the moment they leave India they lose their rights as British subjects and can be treated by foreign Governments as a degraded and an outcaste race.

In another article it says :

The matter is eminently one for good offices and for influence for that "friendly negotiation" which Mr. Chamberlain promises, though he warns the deputation that it may be tedious and will certainly not be easy. As to the Cape Colony and Natal, the question is to a certain extent simplified, since of course the Colonial Office can speak to them with greater authority.

The incident is one of those which suggests wider questions than any that directly offer themselves for official replies. We are at the centre of a world-wide Empire at a period when locomotion is easy and is every day becoming easier, both in time and cost. Some portions of the Empire are crowded, others are comparatively empty, and the flow from the congested to the under-peopled districts is continuous. What is to happen when subjects differing in colour, religion and habits from ourselves or from the natives of a particular spot emigrate to that spot for their living? How are race prejudices and antipathies, the jealousies of trade, the fear of competition to be controlled? The answer, of course, must be by intelligent policy at the Colonial Office.

Small as are the requirements of the Indian, the steady growth of the population of India is such that a certain outward movement is inevitable, and it is a movement that will increase. It is very desirable that our white fellow-subjects in Africa should understand that there will, in all probability, be this current flowing from India, that it is perfectly within the rights of the British Indian to seek his subsistence at the Cape, and that he ought, in the common interest of the Empire to be well treated when he comes there. It is indeed to be feared that the ordinary Colonist, wherever settled, thinks much more of his immediate interests than of those of the great empire which protects him, and he has some difficulty in recognising a fellow-subject in the Hindu or the Parsee. The duty of the Colonial Office is to enlighten him and to see that fair treatment is extended to British subjects of whatever colour.

Again :

In India, the British, the Hindu and the Mussalman communities find themselves face to face with the question as to whether

at the outset of the new industrial movements which have been so long and anxiously awaited, Indian traders and workers are or are not to have the same status before the law as all other British subjects enjoy. May they or may they not go freely from one British possession to another and claim the rights of British subjects in allied States or are they to be treated as outcaste races subjected to a system of permits and passes when travelling on their ordinary business avocations and relegated, as the Transvaal Government would relegate them, to a ghetto at the permanent centres of their trade? These are questions which applied to all Indians who seek to better their fortunes outside the limits of the Indian Empire. Mr. Chamberlain's words and the determined attitude taken up by every section of the Indian press show that for two such questions there can be but one answer.

I shall take the liberty to give one more quotation from the same journal :

The question with which Mr. Chamberlain was called upon to deal cannot be so easily reduced to concrete terms. On the one hand he clearly laid down the principle of the "equal rights" and equal privilege of all British subjects in regard to redress from foreign States. It would, indeed, have been impossible to deny that principle. Our Indian subjects have been fighting the battles of Great Britain over half the old world with the loyalty and courage which have won the admiration of all British men. The fighting reserve which Great Britain has in the Indian races adds greatly to her political influence and prestige, and it would be a violation of the British sense of justice to use the blood and the valour of these races in war and yet to deny them the protection of the British name in the enterprise of peace. The Indian workers and traders are slowly spreading across the earth from Central Asia to the Australian Colonies and from the Straits Settlements to the Canary Islands. Wherever the Indian goes he is the same useful well-doing man, law-abiding under whatever form of Government he may find himself, frugal in his wants and industrious in his habits. But these very virtues make him a formidable competitor in the labour markets to which he resorts. Although numbering in the aggregate some hundreds of thousands, the immigrant Indian labourers and small dealers have only recently appeared in the foreign countries or British Colonies in numbers sufficient to arouse jealousy and to expose them to political injustice.

But the facts which we brought to notice in June, and which were urged on Mr. Chamberlain by a deputation of Indians last week, show that the necessity has now arisen for protecting the Indian labourer from such jealousy and for securing to him the same rights as other British subjects enjoy.

Gentlemen, Bombay has spoken in no uncertain terms. We are yet young and inexperienced, we have a right to appeal to you, our elder and freer brethren for protection. Being under the yoke of oppression we can merely cry out in anguish. You have heard our cry. The blame will now lie on your shoulders if the yoke is not removed from our necks.

### DEPUTATION TO LORD SELBORNE

Messrs. Abdul Gani (Chairman, British Indian Association), Mr. Haji Habib (Secretary, Pretoria Committee), Mr. E. S. Coovadia, Mr. P. Moonsamy Moonlight, Mr. Ayob Haeje Beg Mahomed and Mr. M. K. Gandhi formed a deputation that waited on Lord Selborne on November 22nd, 1905. On behalf of the deputation, Mr. Gandhi presented the following statement of the position to His Excellency :

#### THE STATEMENT

There are besides laws affecting coloured people and therefore British Indian's, the Peace Preservation Ordinance and Law 3 of 1885 as amended in 1886.

#### THE PEACE PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

The Peace Preservation Ordinance, as its name implies, although framed to keep out of the Colony dangerous characters, is being used mainly to prevent British Indians from entering the Transvaal. The working of the law has always been harsh and oppressive, and this in spite of the desire of the Chief Secretary for permits that it should not be so. He has to receive instructions from the Colonial Office so that the harsh working is due, not to the chief officer in charge of the Department but to the system under which it is being worked. (a) There are still hundreds of refugees waiting to come. (b) Boys with their parents or without are required to take out permits. (c) Men with old £3 registrations coming into the country without permits are, though refugees, being sent away and required to make formal application. (d) Even wives of Transvaal residents are expected to take out permits if they are alone and to pay £3 registration whether with or without their husbands. (Correspondence is now going on between the Government and the British Indian Association on the point.) (e) Children under sixteen, if it cannot be proved that their parents are dead, or are residents of the Transvaal, are being sent away or are refused permits in spite of the fact that they may be supported by their relatives who are their guardian and who are residing in the Transvaal. (f) No non-refugee British Indians are allowed to enter the Colony, no matter what their station may be in life.

(The last prohibition causes serious inconvenience to the established merchants who, by reason thereof, are prevented from drawing upon India for confidential managers or clerks.)

In spite of the declarations of her late Majesty's ministers, and assurances of relief after the establishment of civil Government, this law remains on the statute-book and is being fully enforced though many laws, which were considered to be in conflict with the British constitution, were repealed as soon as British authority was proclaimed in the Transvaal. Law 3 of 1885 is insulting to British Indians and was accepted totally under a misapprehension. It imposes the following restrictions on Indians: (a) It prevents them from enjoying burger rights. (b) It prohibits ownership of fixed property except in streets, wards, or locations set apart for the residence of Indians. (c) It contemplates compulsory segregation in locations of British Indians for purposes of sanitation. And (d) it imposes a levy of £5 on every Indian who may enter the Colony for purposes of trade or the like.

#### REFORMED ADMINISTRATION OF ORDINANCE

It is respectfully submitted on behalf of the British Indian Association that the Peace Preservation Ordinance should be so administered that (a) it should facilitate the entry of all refugees without delay. (b) Children under sixteen should be exempt from any restriction whatsoever if they have their parents or supporters with them. (c) Female relatives of British Indians should be entirely free from interference or restriction as to the rights on entry. And (d) a limited number of Indians, though not refugees, should, on the application of resident traders who may satisfy the Permit Officer that they require the services of such men, be granted permits for residence during the period of their contract of service. (e) Indians with educational attainment should be allowed to enter the Colony on application.

#### REPEAL OF COLOUR LEGISLATION

Both the Law of 1885 and the Peace Preservation Ordinance and all other colour legislation affecting British Indians should be repealed so soon as possible and they should be assured as to—

(a) Their right to own landed property. (b) To live where they like subject to the general sanitary laws of the Colony. (c) Exemption from any special payment. (d) And generally freedom from special legislation and enjoyment of civil rights and liberty in the same manner and to the same extent as the other Colonists.

#### SUBSTITUTES SUGGESTED

Though the British Indian Association does not share the fear of the European inhabitants that an unrestricted immigration from India will swamp the latter, as an earnest of its intention to work in harmony with them and to conciliate them, it has all along submitted that: (a) The Peace Preservation Ordinance should be

placed by an immigration law of a general character on the Cape the Natal basis, provided that the educational test recognises the Indian languages and that power be given to the Government to grant residential permits to such men as may be required for the wants of Indians who may be themselves already established in business. (b) A Dealer's Licenses Law of a general character to be passed, applicable to all sections of the community whereby Town Councils or Local Boards could control the issue of new trade licenses subject to appeal to the Supreme Court to review the decisions of such Councils or Local Boards. Under such a law whilst the then existing licenses would be fully protected except when the premises licensed are not kept in a sanitary condition, all new applicants would have to be approved of by the Town Councils or Local Boards, so that the increase of licenses would be simply dependent upon the bodies above-named.

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### MR. GANDHI'S ADDRESS

matter, he presenting the statement to Lord Selborne, Mr. Gandhi repeated His Excellency as follows:

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### PRELIMINARY REPRESENTATIONS

ing fore I deal with the statement I am to hand to your and ency, I have been asked to mention two matters and have occurred during your recent tour through the Transvaal. Your Excellency is reported to have said at Potchefstroom that "no non-refugee British Indians would be allowed to enter the Colony until the Representative Assembly has considered the question next year". If the report is correct, it would, as I hope to show this afternoon, be a very grave injustice to the vested rights of the Indian community. At Ermelo, your Excellency is reported to have used the expression "coolie store-keepers". This expression has given very great offence to the British Indians in the Colony, but the British Indian Association has assured them that the expression has probably not been used by your Excellency, or, if it has, your Excellency is incapable of giving thereby any intentional offence to British Indian store-keepers. The

use of the word "coolie" has caused a great deal of mischief in Natal. At one time it became so serious that the then Justice, Sir Walter Wagg, had to intervene and to put down the use of that expression in connection with any but indentured Indians, it having been imported in the Court of Justice. As your Excellency may be aware it means "labourer" or "porter". Used, therefore, in connection with traders, it is not only offensive but contradiction in terms.

#### THE PEACE PRESERVATION ORDINANCE

Coming to the statement that the British Indian Commission is submitting to your Excellency, I would talk of the Peace Preservation Ordinance. Soon after the Transvaal became part of the British Dominion, the services rendered during the war by the dhoolies that came with Sir George White, and those rendered by the Indian Ambulance Corps in Natal, were on the people's lips. Sir George White spoke in glowing terms of the heroism of Parbhur Singh who, perched up in a tree, never once failed to ring the gong as a notice to the inhabitants each time the Boer gun was fired from the Umbulwana Hill. General Buller's despatches praising the work of the corps were just out and the administration was in the hands of the military officers who knew the Indians. The first batch of refugees, therefore, who were waiting at the ports, entered the country without any difficulty, but the civilian population became alarmed and called for the restriction of the entry of even the refugees. The result was that the country was dotted with Asiatic officers and from that time up to-day the Indian community has known no rest; whereas aliens, in every sense of the term as a rule got their permits at the

ports on application there and then; the Indian, even though a refugee, had to write to the supervisors of Asiatics who had to refer the application to the Colonial Office before permits were issued. The process took a very long time from two to six months and even one year and more and then, too, the Colonial Office had laid down a rule that only so many permits should be issued to British Indian refugees per week. The result of this mode of operation was that corruption became rampant and there grew up a gang of permit-agents who simply fleeced innocent refugees, and it was a matter of notoriety that each refugee who wanted to enter the Transvaal had to spend from £15 to £30 or more. The matter came to the notice of the British Indian Association, repeated representations were made and ultimately the Asiatic offices were wiped out. The mode of granting permits was however unfortunately still kept up, and the Chief Secretary for Permits has been always subject to instruction from the Colonial Office. Thus the Peace Preservation Ordinance, which was intended to apply to dangerous characters and political offenders under the influence of the Colonial Office, had become an Indian Immigration Restriction Law as it remains to this day. Under the present regime, too, therefore it is a most difficult matter for even *bona fide* refugees to get permits, and it is only in rare cases that it is possible to get them except after a delay of months. Every one, no matter what his status may be, has to make an application on a special form, give two references and put his thumb impression upon the form. The matter is then investigated and the permit is granted. As if this were not enough owing to the charges made by Mr. Loveday and his friends, the Chief Secretary for Permits



received instructions to insist on European references. This was tantamount to the denial of the right of British Indian refugees to enter the country. It would be hard to find twenty Indians who would be known to respectable Europeans by name as well as appearance. The British Indian Association had to correspond with the Government and in the meantime the issue of permits was suspended, and it has been only lately realised that the insisting upon European reference was a serious injustice.

#### THE ENTRY OF CHILDREN

But still the difficulties, apart from the necessity for European references, are there. Male children under sixteen years of age are now called upon to take out permits before they can enter the Colony, so that it has been not an uncommon experience for little children of ten years of age and under to be torn away from their parents at the border towns. Why such a rule has been imposed we fail to understand.

The High Commissioner: Have you ever known a case where the parents have stated beforehand that they have children and which children have been refused permission to come in?

Mr. Gandhi: Yes; and the parents have been obliged to make affidavits before the children have been allowed to come in.

If the parents have the right to enter, so far as I am aware, every civilised country has admitted the right of minor children also to enter with them and, in any case, children under sixteen years, if they cannot prove their parents are dead, or that their parents have been resident in the Transvaal before the war, are not allowed to enter or remain in the Colony. This is a very serious matter. As your Excellency is aware, the "joint-family"

system prevails all over India. Brothers and sisters and their children live under the same roof from generation to generation, and the eldest member in the family is nominally, as well as in reality, the supporter and the bread-earner. There is, therefore, nothing unusual in Indians bringing the children of their relatives into the country, and it is submitted that it will be a very serious injustice if such children who have hitherto been left unmolested are either deported from the Colony or prevented from entering the Colony. The Government, again, intend to require the female relatives of resident Indians also to be registered in the same manner as the males. The British Indian Association has sent an emphatic protest against any such measure and has even submitted that it would be prepared to fight the question in a court of law as, according to the advice given to it, wives of resident Indians are not required to take out registration certificates and pay £3.

#### THE ENTRY OF SPECIAL CLERKS, ETC.

No new permits are granted by the Government, no matter how necessary it may be in certain cases. We were all extremely pleased to read in the papers your Excellency's emphatic declaration that the vested interests of the Indians who are already settled in the country should not be disturbed or touched. There are merchants who have constantly to draw upon India for confidential clerks in order to enable them to carry on their business. It is not easy to pick out reliable men from the resident population. That is the experience of merchants all over and belonging to all communities. If, therefore, new Indians are absolutely shut out of the country until the establishment of representative government, it will seriously interfere with these vested interests and, in any case, it is

difficult to see why men of attainments and education, whether they be refugees or not, should not be able to have their permits on application. And, in spite of all these hardships, our anti-Indian friends are never tired of saying the country is flooded with British Indians who were never in the Transvaal. They have made a point of saying that every Indian who was before in the country was registered. I hardly think it is necessary for me to dilate upon this matter, as your Excellency has been told that all the facts with reference to this charge are wrong, but I may be pardoned for referring your Excellency to a case that happened in 1893. Shire and Dumat were large contractors of labour. They brought into the country at one time 800 Indian labourers. How many more they brought I do not know. The then State Attorney insisted that they should take out registration certificates and pay £3 each. Shire and Dumat tested the matter in the High Court and the then Chief Justice, Kotze, held that these men were not, in the terms of the law, called upon to pay £3, as they did not enter for "purposes of trade" and that he could not help the Government even if the men, after the contract was over, subsequently remained in the country. That is only one instance which cannot be gainsaid, in which hundreds of Indians remained in the country without paying £3 each. The British Indian Association has always submitted and that from personal experience, that hundreds of Indians who did not take out trade licences, remained in the country without ever registering themselves and paying £3.

#### BAZAARS AND LOCATIONS

Coming to Law 3 of 1885, it has been often urged that Indians, after the establishment of British Government in this country, have received relief with reference

to trade licenses. Nothing, however, can be farther from the truth. Before the war, we were able to trade anywhere we liked as against tender of payment for licence money. The long arm of the British Government was then strong enough to protect us, and up to the very eve of the war, in spite of the constant threats of the then Government to prosecute British Indians who were trading, no action was taken. It is true that now, owing to the decision of the Supreme Court, Indian trade is unfettered but that is in spite of the Government. Up to the very last moment the Government declined to come to the rescue and a notice was published called the "Bazaars Notice", which stated that, after a certain date, every Indian who did not hold a licence to trade at the outbreak of war outside locations, would be expected not only to remove to locations but to trade there also. After the notice was published locations were established in almost every town, and when every effort to get justice at the hands of the Government was exhausted, as a last resort it was decided to test the matter in a court of law. The whole of the Government machinery was then set in motion against us. Before the war a similar case was fought, and the British Government aided the Indians to seek an interpretation of the law which we have now received from the present Supreme Court. After the establishment of the British Government, all these forces were against us. It is a cruel irony of fate, and there is no use disguising the fact that we have felt it most keenly and this, I may state, as has now transpired, in spite of the fact that the then Attorney-General told the Government that the interpretation they sought to place upon the law was bad, that, if it went to the Supreme Court, the matter would

be decided in favour of British Indians. If, therefore, British Indians have not been sent to locations and are free to trade anywhere they like and to live where they like—as I say, it is because it is notwithstanding the intentions of the Government to the contrary. In every instance, Law 3 of 1885 has been, so far as the Indians are concerned, most strictly interpreted against us and we have not been allowed advantage of any loopholes that are left in it in our favour. For instance, British Indians are not debarred from owning landed property in “streets, wards, or locations that may be set apart” by the Government. The Government have resolutely declined to consider the words “streets and wards” and have simply clung to the word “locations”, and these locations, too, have been established miles away. We have pleaded hard, saying that the Government have the power to give us the right to ownership of land in streets and wards, that they should make use of that power in our favour, but the plea has been in vain. Even land which is being used for religious purposes, the Government would not transfer in the names of the trustees as in Johannesburg, Heidelberg, Pretoria and Potchefstroom, although the mosque premises are good in every respect from a sanitary standpoint. It is time, we therefore submit, that some relief was granted to us while new legislation is under consideration.

#### CLASS LEGISLATION

As to the new legislation to replace Law 3 of 1885, the despatch drawn by Sir Arthur Lawley has caused us a very great deal of pain. It insists on legislation affecting British Indians or Asiatics as such. It also insists on the principle of compulsory segregation, both of which are in conflict with the repeated assurances given to

British Indians. Sir Arthur Lawley, I wish to say with the greatest deference, has allowed himself to be led astray by what he saw in Natal. Natal has been held up as an example of what the Transvaal would be, but the responsible politicians in Natal have always admitted that Indians have been the saving of the Colony. Sir James Hulett stated before the Native Affairs Commission that the Indian, even as a trader, was a desirable citizen and formed a better link between the white wholesale merchant and the native. Sir Arthur Lawley had also stated that, even if promises were made to British Indians, they were made in ignorance of the facts as they now are, and therefore it would be a greater duty to break them than to carry them out. With the greatest deference, I venture to submit that this is a wrong view to take of the promises. We are not dealing with promises that were made fifty years ago, though we undoubtedly rely upon the Proclamation of 1858 as our "Magna Charta". That proclamation has been reaffirmed more than once. Viceroy after Viceroy has stated emphatically that it was a promise acted upon. At the Conference of the Colonial Premiers, Mr. Chamberlain laid down the same doctrine and told the Premiers that no legislation affecting British Indians as such would be countenanced by Her late Majesty's Government, that it would be putting an affront quite unnecessarily on millions of the loyal subjects of the Crown, and that, therefore, the legislation that was passed, could only be of a general character. It was for that reason that the first Immigration Restriction Act of Australia was vetoed. It was for the same reason that the first Natal Franchise Act was vetoed, and it was for the same reason that the Colony of Natal, after submitting a

draft bill applicable to Asiatics as such, had to draft another measure. There are matters, not of years gone by, but of recent years. It cannot be said that there are to-day any new facts that have come to light to change all this. Indeed, even immediately before the war, declarations were made by Ministers that one of the reasons was to protect the rights of British Indians. Lastly, but not least, your Excellency, too, gave expression to similar sentiments on the eve of the war. Though, therefore, the manner in which Sir Arthur Lawley has approached the question is, in our humble opinion, very unjust and inconsistent with the British traditions, we, in order to show that we wish to co-operate with the white colonists, have submitted that, even though no such law existed before, there may now be an Immigration Act after the basis of the Cape or Natal, except that, as to the educational test, the great Indian languages should be recognised and that the already established British Indian merchants should have facilities afforded to them for importing temporarily men whom they may require in their businesses. That will at once do away with the fear of what has been termed an Asiatic invasion. We have also submitted that with reference to trade licences which have caused so much grumbling, the power should be given to the Local Boards or Town Councils to regulate the issue of any new licence subject to the control of the Supreme Court. All the existing licences should be taken out of the operation of any such statute, because they represent vested interests. We feel that, if those two measures were passed, and Law 3 of 1885 were repealed, some measure and only some measure of justice would be done to Indians. We submit that we ought to have perfect freedom of owning landed property

• and of living where we like under the general municipal regulations as to sanitation and appearance of buildings, and during the time that the legislation is being formed, the Peace Preservation Ordinance should be regulated in accordance with the spirit of such regulation, and liberal interpretation should be placed upon Law 3 of 1885. It seems to me to be foreign to the nature of the British Constitution as I have been taught from my childhood, and it is difficult for my countrymen to understand that, under the British flag which protects aliens, its own subjects should be debarred from holding a foot of landed property so long as good use is made of it. Under the conditions, therefore, submitted by the Association, it ought to be possible for the Government to free the Statute Book of the Colony from legislation that necessarily insults British Indians. I do not wish to touch on such questions as footpath regulations when we have to consider the question of bread and butter and life and death. What we want is not political power; but we do wish to live side by side with other British subjects in peace and amity, and with dignity and self-respect. We, therefore, feel that the moment His Majesty's Government decide to pass legislation differentiating between class and class, there would be an end to that freedom which we have learned to cherish as a priceless heritage of living under the British Crown.

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## DEPUTATION TO LORD ELGIN

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The deputation to the Earl of Selborne, High Commissioner in South Africa, having failed in its efforts to obtain redress, the Indians led by Mr. Gandhi organised an agitation in England and succeeded in enlisting the sympathy of many Englishmen in the cause of the South African Indians. An influential Committee with Lord Ampthill as President, Sir M. M. Bhownaggee as Executive Chairman and Mr. Ritch as Secretary, was formed to guard over Indian interests and a deputation from among the leading sympathisers of the cause of British Indians in South Africa was organised to wait on the Earl of Elgin, the Colonial Secretary. The deputation which consisted of Lord Stanley of Alderley, Mr. H. O. Ally, Mr. M. K. Gandhi, Sir Lepel Griffin, Mr. J. D. Rees, O.L.E., M.P., Sir George Birdwood, K.C.S.I., Sir Henry Cotton, K.C.S.I., M.P., Mr. Dadabhai Naoroji, Sir M. M. Bhownaggee, K.C.L.E., Mr. Amir Ali, Mr. Harold Cox, M.P., and Mr. Thornton, C.S.I., waited on Lord Elgin, on Thursday, November 8, 1906, at the Colonial Office. Lord Elgin began by saying that his sentiments would all be in favour of doing anything he could for the interest of British Indians. Sir Lepel Griffin having introduced the delegates in a neat little speech, Mr. Gandhi, as one of the two delegates from South Africa, spoke as follows :

Both Mr. Ally and I are very much obliged to your Lordship for giving us the opportunity of placing the British Indian position before you. Supported though we are by distinguished Anglo-Indian friends and others, I feel that the task before Mr. Ally and myself, is very difficult, because your Lordship, in reply to the cablegram sent to you through Lord Selborne, after the great Indian Mass Meeting in Johannesburg, was pleased to inform the British Indian Association that, although you would be pleased to give us every opportunity of stating our case, no good purpose was likely to be served, as your Lordship had approved of the principle of the Ordinance, in that it gave some measure of relief to the British Indian community, though not as much as His

Majesty's Government would desire. We, who are the men on the spot, and who are affected by the Ordinance in question, have ventured to think otherwise. We have felt that this Ordinance does not give us any relief whatsoever. It is a measure which places British Indians in a far worse position than before, and makes the lot of the British Indian well-nigh intolerable. Under the Ordinance, the British Indian is assumed to be a criminal. If a stranger, not knowing the circumstances of the Transvaal, were to read the Ordinance, he would have no hesitation in coming to the conclusion that an Ordinance of that nature, which carries so many penalties, and wounds the British Indian community on all sides, must only apply to thieves or a gang of robbers. I venture, therefore, to think that, although Sir Lepel Griffin has used strong language in connection with the Ordinance, he has not at all exaggerated, but every word of it is justified. At the same time I beg to state that the Ordinance, as amended, does not apply to British Indian females. The Draft Ordinance undoubtedly applied to females also, but owing to the very strong protest made by the British Indian Association, and by Mr. Ally separately, as Chairman of the Hamidia Islamic Society, pointing out the great violence that would have been done to female sanctity, if I may say so, the Ordinance was amended so as to take females out of its operation. But it applies to all adult males and even to children, in that the parents or guardians have to take out registration certificates for their children or wards, as the case may be.

It is a fundamental maxim of the British law that every one is presumed to be innocent until he is found guilty, but the Ordinance reverses the process, brands

every Indian as guilty and leaves no room for him to prove his innocence. There is absolutely nothing proved against us, and yet every British Indian, no matter what his status is, is to be condemned as guilty, and not treated as an innocent man. My Lord, an Ordinance of this nature it is not possible for British Indians to reconcile themselves to. I do not know that such an Ordinance is applicable to free British subjects in any parts of His Majesty's Dominions.

Moreover, what the Transvaal thinks to-day, the other Colonies think to-morrow. When Lord Milner sprang his Bazaar Notice on British Indians, the whole of South Africa rang with the idea. The term "bazaar" is a misnomer; it has been really applied to locations where trade is utterly impossible. However, a proposal was seriously made, after a Bazaar Notice by the then Mayor of Durban, Mr. Ellis Brown, that Indians should be relegated to bazaars. There is not the slightest reason why this Ordinance also, if it ever becomes law, should not be copied by the other parts of South Africa. The position to-day in Natal is that even indentured Indians are not required to carry passes as contemplated by the Asiatic Law Amendment Ordinance; nor are there any penalties attached to the non-carrying of passes as are defined in the Ordinance under discussion. We have already shown in our humble representation that no relief has been granted by this Ordinance, because the remission of the £3 fee referred to by Mr. Duncan is quite illusory, because all we British Indians resident in the Transvaal, who are obliged to pay £3 under Law 3 of 1885, and those who, under Lord Selborne's promises are likely to be allowed to re-enter the Transvaal, have paid the £3 already.

The authority to issue temporary permits is also superfluous, in that the Government have already exercised the power, and there are to-day in the Transvaal several Indians in possession of temporary permits. They are liable to be expelled from the Colony on the expiry of their permits.

The relief under the Liquor-Ordinance is, British Indians feel, a wanton insult. So much was thus recognised by the local Government that they immediately assured the Indians that it was not intended for British Indians at all but for somebody else. We have no connection with anybody else and we have always endeavoured to show that the British Indians ought to be treated as British subjects and ought not to be included with the general body of Asiatics with respect to whom there may be a need for some restrictions which ought not to apply to British Indians as British subjects.

There remains one more sentiment, that is, in connection with the land owned by the late Aboobaker. The land should belong to the heirs by right, but under the interpretation reluctantly put upon it by the Supreme Court that it is only individual in character and does not touch the community, the land cannot be transmitted to the heirs. The Ordinance is intended to rectify the error, but as I had the honour to represent the heirs, I ventured to think that even they would not consent to pay for getting this relief at the price, in the nature of the Ordinance for British Indians; and certainly the Indian community can never exchange for the relief given to the heirs of the land of Aboobaker an Ordinance of this nature, which requires them to pay so great a price for what is really their own. So that under the Ordinance, in that respect again, there is absolutely no relief. As

I said before, we shall be under the Ordinance branded as criminals.

My Lord, the existing legislation is severe enough. I hold in my hands returns from the Court of the Magistrate at Volkarust. Over 150 successful prosecutions of Indians attempting to enter the Transvaal have taken place during the years 1905 and 1906. All these prosecutions, I venture to say, are by no means just. I venture to believe that, if these prosecutions were gone into, you would see that some of them were absolutely groundless.

So far as the question of identification is concerned, the present laws are quite enough. I produce to your Lordship the Registration Certificate held by me, and it will show how complete it is to establish identification. The present law can hardly be called an amendment. I produce before your Lordship a registration receipt held by my colleague, Mr. Ally, from the Transvaal Government. Your Lordship will see that it is merely a receipt for £3. The registration under the present Ordinance is of a different type. When Lord Milner wished to enforce Law 3 of 1885, he suggested new registration. We protested against it, but on his strong advice, as a voluntary act, we allowed ourselves to be newly registered; and hence the form produced before your Lordship. At the time the registration was undertaken, Lord Milner stated emphatically that it was a measure once for all, and that it would form a complete title to residence by those who hold such registration certificates. Is all this now to be undone?

Your Lordship is doubtless aware of the Punia case, wherein a poor Indian woman in the company of her husband was torn away from her husband and was ordered by the Magistrate to leave the country within

seven hours. Fortunately, relief was granted in the end as the matter was taken up in time. A boy under eleven years was also arrested and sentenced to pay a fine of £30 or to go to gaol for three months and at the end of it to leave the country. In this case, again, the Supreme Court has been able to grant justice. The conviction was pronounced to be wholly had, and Sir James Rose-Innes stated that the Administration would bring upon itself ridicule and contempt if such a policy was pursued. If the existing legislation is strong enough and severe enough to thus prosecute British Indians, is it not enough to keep out of the colony British Indians who may attempt fraudulently to enter it ?

It has been stated that the reason for passing the Ordinance is, that there is an unauthorised influx of British Indians into the Transvaal on a wholesale scale, and that there is an attempt on the part of the Indian community to introduce Indians in such a manner. The last charge has been, times without number, repudiated by the Indian community, and the makers of the charge have been challenged to prove their statement. The first statement has also been denied.

I ought to mention one thing also ; that is, the fourth resolution that was passed at the British Indian Mass Meeting. It was passed by the meeting solemnly, prayerfully, and in all humility, and the whole of that great meeting decided by that resolution that, if this Ordinance ever came to be enforced and we did not get relief, the British Indians rather than submit to the great degradation involved in it would go to gaol, such was the intensity of the feeling aroused by the Ordinance. We have hitherto suffered much in the Transvaal and in other parts of South Africa ; but the hardship has been

tolerable ; we have not considered it necessary to travel 6,000 miles to place the position before the Imperial Government. But the straining point has been reached by the Ordinance, and we felt that we should in all humility exhaust every resource even to the extent of sending a deputation to wait on your Lordship.

The least therefore that, in my humble opinion, is due to the British Indian community, is to appoint a Commission as suggested in the humble representation submitted to your Lordship. It is a time-honoured British custom that, whenever an important principle is involved, a Commission is appointed before a step is taken. The question of Alien Immigration into the United Kingdom is a parallel case. Charges somewhat similar to the charges against the Indian community were made against the aliens who enter the United Kingdom. There was also the question of adequacy of the existing legislation and the necessity for further legislation. All these three points were referred to a Commission before any step was taken. I therefore venture to think that a Commission should be appointed and the whole question threshed out before any drastic measures are taken.

I venture therefore to hope that your Lordship will see your way to grant this small measure of relief to the British Indian community.

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## BEFORE THE COURT IN 1907

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Mr. Gandhi's appeal to Lord Elgin and the efforts of the British Committee in London were successful only to the extent of securing from Lord Elgin a declaration that the ordinance would be hung up until the matter had received the consideration of the Transvaal Parliament that was shortly to come into being. A constitutional Government was soon after formed in the Transvaal and the new measure received the Royal Assent and became Law. The Indian community in Transvaal, seeing that their efforts were all in vain, determined to fight and risk the consequences of disobedience in accordance with the resolution passed at a vast mass meeting of some 3,000 British Indians held at the Empire Theatre, Johannesburg.

On the 26th December 1907, the Royal Assent to the Immigration Act was announced and simultaneously came the news that a number of the leaders of the two Asiatic communities were warned to appear before the Magistrate to show cause why, having failed to apply for registration, as required by the law, they should not be ordered to leave the Transvaal. They were directed to leave the Colony within a given period, and failing to do so, they were sentenced to simple imprisonment for two months. Mr. Gandhi was one of those arrested and brought to trial.

In Christmas week of 1907, Mr. Gandhi received a telephone message from Mr. H. F. D. Papentue, Acting Commissioner of Police for the Transvaal, asking him to call at Marlborough House. Upon arriving there, he was informed that the arrests had been ordered of himself and 25 others.

The following account of the proceedings in Court is taken from the *Indian Opinion* :

Mr. Gandhi gave his word that all would appear before the respective magistrates at 10 A.M. next day and the Commissioner accepted this guarantee. Next morning when he attended at the British Criminal Court, he was asked by the Superintendent whether he held duly issued registration certificates under Law 2 of 1907 and upon receiving replies in the negative, he was promptly arrested and charged under Section 8 sub-Section 2 of Act 2 of



1907, in that he was in the Transvaal without a registration certificate issued under the Act. The Court was crowded to excess and it seemed as if at one time the barrier would be overthrown.

Mr. D. J. Shurman prosecuted on behalf of the Crown.

Mr. Gandhi pleaded guilty.

Superintendent Vernon gave evidence as to the arrest.

Mr. Gandhi asked no questions but went into the box prepared to make a statement. He said what he was about to state was not evidence but he hoped the Court would grant him indulgence to make a short explanation seeing that he was an officer of that Court. He wished to say why he had not submitted to this.

Mr. Jordan (Magistrate): I don't think that has anything to do with it. The law is there, and you have disobeyed it. I do not want any political speeches made.

Mr. Gandhi: I do not want to make any political speeches.

Mr. Jordan: The question is, have you registered or not? If you have not registered there is an end of the case. If you have any explanation to offer as regards the order I am going to make that is another story. There is the law which has been passed by the Transvaal Legislature and sanctioned by the Imperial Government. All I have to do and all I can do is to administer that law as it stands.

Mr. Gandhi: I do not wish to give any evidence in extenuation and I know that legally I cannot give evidence at all.

Mr. Jordan: All I have to deal with is legal evidence. What you want to say, I suppose, is that you do not approve of the law and you conscientiously resist it.

Mr. Gandhi: That is perfectly true.

Mr. Jordan : I will take the evidence if you say you conscientiously object.

Mr. Gandhi was proceeding to state when he came to the Transvaal and the fact that he was Secretary to the British Indian Association when Mr. Jordan said he did not see how that affected the case.

Mr. Gandhi : I said that before and I simply asked the indulgence of the Court for five minutes.

Mr. Jordan : I don't think this is a case in which the Court should grant any indulgence ; you have defied the law.

Mr. Gandhi : Very well, Sir, then I have nothing more to say.

The Magistrate then ordered Mr. Gandhi to leave the country in 48 hours.

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## BEFORE THE COURT IN 1908

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On the 11th January 1908 Mr. Gandhi appeared before the Court and he pleaded guilty to the charge of disobeying the order of the Court to leave the Colony within 48 hours.

Mr. Gandhi asked leave to make a short statement and having obtained it, he said he thought there should be distinction made between his case and those who were to follow. He had just received a message from Pretoria stating that his compatriots had been tried there and had been sentenced to three months' imprisonment with hard labour, and they had been fined a heavy amount in lieu of payment of which they would receive a further period of three months' hard labour. If these men had committed an offence, he had committed a greater offence, and he asked the Magistrate to impose upon him the heaviest penalty.

Mr. Jordan: You asked for the heaviest penalty which the law authorised?

Mr. Gandhi: Yes, Sir.

Mr. Jordan: I must say I do not feel inclined to accede to your request of passing the heaviest sentence which is six months' hard labour with a fine of £500. That appears to me to be totally out of proportion to the offence which you have committed. The offence practically is contempt of Court in having disobeyed the order of December 28, 1907. This is more or less a political offence, and if it had not been for the political defiance set to the law, I should have thought it my duty to pass the lowest sentence which I am authorised by the Act. Under the circumstance, I think a fair sentence to meet the case would be two months' imprisonment without hard labour.

Mr. Gandhi was then removed in custody.

As a result of negotiations, General Smuts suspended the operation of the Act and agreed to accept voluntary re-registration promising at the same time to introduce repealing legislation in the next Session of Parliament provided that voluntary re-registration had been satisfactorily effected. True to his promise, Mr. Gandhi took to voluntary re-registration and began advising his countrymen to do so.

One morning in February 1908, when Mr. Gandhi set out to fulfil his pledge to the Transvaal Government that he would undertake voluntary registration, he was attacked by a small section of the Passive Resisters who imagined that Mr. Gandhi was playing the coward and betraying his trust. Though bleeding profusely he refused to seek police protection against his own countrymen and would not permit the doctor to stitch up his face before completing the form of application for voluntary registration. That same day, though tossing with fever, he issued the following manifesto from his sick-bed:

Those who have committed the act did not know what they were doing. They thought that I was doing what was wrong. They have had their redress in the only manner they know. I, therefore, request that no steps be taken against them.

Seeing that the assault was committed by a Mahomedan or Mahomedans, the Hindus might probably feel hurt. If so, they would put themselves in the wrong before the world and their Maker. Rather let the blood spilt to-day cement the two communities indissolubly—such is my heartfelt prayer. May God grant it! . . . The spirit of passive resistance rightly understood should make the people fear none and nothing but God—no cowardly fear, therefore, should deter the vast majority of sober-minded Indians from doing their duty. The promise of repeal of the Act against voluntary registration having been given, it is the sacred duty of every true Indian to help the Government and the Colony to the uttermost.

## THE ISSUE AT STAKE

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Undisturbed in any way by the murderous attack on him, Mr. Gandhi was able to secure the voluntary registration of his countrymen by the middle of May, 1908. It was now time for General Smuts to carry out his promise to repeal the obnoxious Act. It was clear, however, General Smuts was determined to depart from his promise and to "break faith". Immediate protests were made by both the British Indian and Chinese leaders to General Smuts, who, however, failed to satisfy them, constantly evading the issue. Finally he invited Mr. Gandhi to discuss the difficulty with him, and at the interview produced a draft bill to repeal the Act on condition that Mr. Gandhi, on behalf of the British Indian community, would consent to regard certain classes of Indians as prohibited emigrants, including even those who could pass the most severe education test of the Immigration Act. Recognising at once that General Smuts' intention was to substitute for one piece of insulting legislation an even more humiliating law, Mr. Gandhi indignantly refused to contemplate the suggestion and negotiations were abruptly broken off. The agitation was in full swing; the jails became crowded as usual; a deputation was sent to England to explain to the British public how General Smuts had broken faith and was playing with the liberty and the conscience of the Indian community. The following statement issued by Mr. Gandhi and Mr. Haji Habib on the 5th November 1909 in London gives an account of the abortive negotiation made in England by Mr. Gandhi and the British Committee there for redressing the wrongs of the Transvaal Indians:

The Transvaal British Indian Deputation arrived in London on the 10th day of July last. The enclosed statement of the British Indian case in that Colony was prepared immediately after the arrival in London of that deputation, but it was not issued as delicate negotiations, with a view to arriving at a quiet settlement, were in progress. We have now learnt that these have proved abortive and that the position remains unchanged. It has, therefore, become necessary for us to inform the public as to how the matter stands and what the struggle of the British Indians in the Transvaal means.

Mr. Smuts, the present Colonial Secretary of the Transvaal, offers to repeal the Registration Law around which the struggle has been raging for the last three years and to concede to a limited number of British Indians, other than former residents of the Transvaal, certificates of permanent residence. Were the object aimed at by the British Indians the admission into the Colony of a few more of their brethren, this concession would be material but the object they have had in view in agitating for the repeal of the law being to secure legal or theoretical equality in respect of immigration their purpose is, by the proposed maintenance of the legal disability, not advanced a step. We are not aware whether the above modification of the present law proposed by Mr. Smuts will take place irrespective of the continuance of the passive resistance at present being offered by the British Indians of the Transvaal, but we are in a position to state that the proposed concession will not satisfy passive resisters. The struggle of the Indian community of that Colony was undertaken in order to obtain the removal of the stigma cast upon the whole of India by this legislation, which imports a racial and colour bar into the Immigration Laws of a British Colony for the first time in the history of Colonial legislation. The principle so laid down that British Indians may not enter the Transvaal because they are British Indians is a radical departure from traditional policy, is un-British and intolerable, and if that principle is accepted even tacitly by British Indians, we consider that they will be untrue to themselves, to the land of their birth, and to the Empire to which they belong. Nor is it the passive resisters in the Transvaal who, in a matter of this kind, have alone to be considered. The whole of India is now awakened to a sense of the

insult that the Transvaal legislation offers to her, and we feel that the people here, at the heart of the Empire, cannot remain unmoved by this departure, so unprecedented and so vital from Imperial traditions. Mr. Smuts' proposal brings out the issue in the clearest manner possible. If we were fighting not for a principle but for loaves and fishes, he would be prepared to throw them at us in the shape of residential permits for the small number of cultured British Indians that may be required for our wants, but because we insist upon the removal of the implied racial taint from the legislation of the Colony, he is not prepared to yield an inch. He would give us the husk without the kernel. He declines to remove the badge of inferiority but is ready to change the present rough-looking symbol for a nicely polished one. British Indians, however, decline to be deluded. They may yield everything, occupy any position, but the badge must be removed first. We, therefore, trust that the public will not be misled, by the specious concessions that are being offered, into the belief that British Indians, because they do not accept them, are unreasonable in their demands, that they are uncompromising and that, therefore, they do not deserve the sympathy and support of a common sense and practical public. In the final reply received by us from Lord Crewe, the following is the position that is taken up :

His Lordship explained to you that Mr. Smuts was unable to accept the claim that Asiatics should be placed in a position of equality with Europeans in respect of right of entry or otherwise.

Herein lies the crux. Legal equality in respect of the right of entry, even though never a man does enter, is what British Indians have been fighting for, and according to the reports we have received from the Transvaal, is

what some of them at least will die for. The only possible justification for holding together the different communities of the Empire under the same sovereignty is the fact of elementary equality, and it is because the Transvaal legislation cuts at the very root of this principle that British Indians have offered a stubborn resistance.

It would be contrary to fact to argue that no relief can be had in this matter because the Transvaal is a Self-Governing Colony, and because now South Africa has got its Union. The difficulty of the situation is due to a mistake committed at the centre of the Empire. The Imperial Government are party to the crime against the Imperial Constitution. They sanctioned when they need not have, and when it was their duty not to have sanctioned the legislation in question. They are now undoubtedly most anxious to settle this troublesome matter. Lord Crewe has endeavoured to bring about a satisfactory result, but he is too late. Mr. Smuts, perhaps, very properly has reminded his Lordship of the fact that the legislation in question had received Imperial sanction, and that he should or could now be called upon to retrace his steps, because the British Indians in the Transvaal had undertaken to disregard the legislation and to suffer the penalties of such disregard. His position as a politician and as an aspirant to high office in a white South Africa is unquestionable, but neither the British public nor the Indian public are interested in his position nor are they party to this crime of the Imperial Government.

We may add that, during the last four months, arrests and imprisonments have gone on unabated. The leaders of the community continue to go to prison. The severity of the prison regulations is maintained. The



prison diet has been altered for the worse. Prominent medical men of Johannesburg have certified that the present dietary scale for Indian prisoners is deficient. The authorities, unlike their action during last year, have ignored the religious scruples of Mahomedan prisoners and have refused to give facilities for observing the sacred annual fast which millions of Mahomedans scrupulously undergo from year to year. Sixty passive resisters recently came out of the Pretoria gaol emaciated and weak. Their message to us is that, starved as they were, they are ready to be re-arrested as soon as the Government wish to lay their hands on them. The acting Chairman of the British Indian Association has only just been arrested and sentenced to be imprisoned for three months with hard labour. This is his third term. He is a Mahomedan. A brave Parsi, a well-educated man, was deported to Natal. He re-entered and is now undergoing six months' imprisonment with hard labour. He is in gaol for the fifth time. A young Indian, an ex-volunteer sergeant, has also gone to gaol for the third time on the same terms as the Parsi. Wives of imprisoned British Indians and their children either take up baskets of fruit, hawk about and earn their living in order to support themselves or are being supported from contributions. Mr. Smuts, when he re-embarked for South Africa, said that he had arrived at an understanding with Lord Crewe that would satisfy the large body of British Indians who were heartily sick of the agitation. His prophecy has been totally disproved by what has happened since.

## THE MARRIAGE QUESTION

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The £3 tax was not the only disability of South African Indians. Among the various legal disabilities to which Indians were subjected, the most galling was the one concerning the introduction of the plural wives of Asiatics into the Transvaal. The law involved great hardship on the Muslims in particular. Mr. Gandhi urged on the Minister "not for a general recognition of polygamy", but contended "that, in continuation of the practice hitherto followed, existing plural wives of domiciled residents should be allowed to enter". On this question the following correspondence between Mr. Gandhi and Mr. E. M. Gorges took place in September 1913. In reply to Mr. Gorges' letter, Mr. Gandhi wrote on 22nd September:

Dear Mr. Gorges,—I am much obliged to you for your letter of the 19th instant regarding the marriage question. I have not widened the original scope of my request. But I shall endeavour as clearly as possible to re-state the position.

It is submitted that authority should be taken from Parliament during its next session to legalise monogamous marriages already solemnised or hereafter to be solemnised by Indian priests among Indians belonging to non-Christian denominations. Legislation has become necessary only because the marriage clause in the new Act was hastily worded without considering the full position. Unless the relief now sought is granted soon, the status of Indian women married in South Africa is that of concubines and their children not lawful heirs of their parents. Such is, as I take it, the effect of the Searle judgment combined with the action of the Natal Master of the Supreme Court and the Gardiner judgment. I have asked for a promise of amelioration during the next session because I submit that the matter is one of urgency. With regard to polygamy, I have not asked

for legal recognition, but the admission under the powers vested in the Minister of plural wives without the Government in any way recognising their legal status. The admission is to be restricted only to plural wives already married to Indians who may be found to be unquestionably domiciled in the Union. This at once restricts the scope of the Government's generosity and enables them to know now how many such wives will have to be admitted. I have already submitted a plan as to how this can be brought about.

In my humble opinion, the letter of the 10th August 1911 referred to in your communication, bears the interpretation I have placed upon it. The British Indian Association raised the question of polygamy and the above-mentioned letter containing the assurance was the reply. I suppose you know that plural wives have actually been admitted by the Immigration Officers and that polygamous unions are even registered on the Transvaal registration certificates.

As doubts have arisen as to the meaning of the term "monogamous marriage", I beg to record that the meaning that the community has placed upon it is, that a marriage is monogamous if a man is married to only one woman, no matter under what religion and no matter whether such religion under given circumstances sanctions polygamy or not.

I observe that paragraph 2 of your letter seems to suggest that my reply to your last wire did not, though it might have, covered the other points referred to therein. I purposely refrained from touching the other points as I felt that no scope was left open for me to do so. But if General Smuts is still prepared to consider the other points, I shall be certainly prepared to make a further

- submission. I cannot help feeling that the unfortunate rupture has taken place on points very vital to the Indian community but of little consequence to the Government or the dominant population of the Union.

Pray always consider me to be one the least desirous to obstruct the Government and most anxious to serve it in so far as I can do so consistently with my duty to my countrymen.

To this Mr. Gorges replied that the Minister after full consideration had asked him to say that it would not be possible for him to give any assurance that legislation on the lines indicated by him would be introduced at the next session. Mr. Gandhi thereupon replied on 28th September:

Dear Mr. Gorges,—I do not know that I am justified in writing this letter to you but, as you have been personally solicitous about the non-revival of passive resistance and as, in the course of my conversations with you, I have so often told you that I have nothing to withhold from the Government, I may as well inform you of what is now going on.

The campaign has started in earnest. As you know, sixteen passive resisters, including four women, are already serving three months' imprisonment with hard labour. The resisters here were awaiting my arrival and the activity here will commence almost immediately.

I cannot help saying that the points on which the struggle has re-started are such that the Government might gracefully grant them to the community. But what I would like to impress upon the Government is the gravity of the step we are about to take. I know that it is fraught with danger. I know also that, once taken, it may be difficult to control the spread of

the movement beyond the limits one may set. I know also what responsibility lies on my shoulders in advising such a momentous step, but I feel that it is not possible for me to refrain from advising a step which I consider to be necessary, to be of educational value and, in the end, to be valuable both to the Indian community and to the State. This step consists in actively, persistently, and continuously asking those who are liable to pay the £3 tax to decline to do so and to suffer the penalties for non-payment and, what is more important, in asking those who are now serving indenture and who will, therefore, be liable to pay the £3 tax on completion of their indenture to strike work until the tax is withdrawn. I feel that, in view of Lord Ampthill's declaration in the House of Lords, evidently with the approval of Mr. Gokhale, as to the definite promise made by the Government and repeated by Lord Gladstone, this advice to indentured Indians would be fully justified. That the tax has weighed most heavily upon the men I know from personal experience; that the men resent it bitterly I also know from personal knowledge. But they have submitted to it more or less with quiet resignation, and I am loth to disturb their minds by any step that I might take or advise. Can I not even now, whilst in the midst of struggle, appeal to General Smuts and ask him to re-consider his decision on the points already submitted and on the question of the £3 tax and, whether this letter is favourably considered or not, may I anticipate the assurance that it will in no wise be taken to be a threat?

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## BEFORE THE COURT IN 1913

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While Mr. Gandhi was leading a deputation to England, another deputation led by Mr. Polak came to India to press the question of the repeal of the £3 tax. Then followed an agitation in England and India in 1910-1912 which compelled attention of the authorities. Mr. Gokhale subsequently visited South Africa and made special representations to the Union Ministers on this particular question and a definite undertaking was given to him that the tax would be repealed. For a time it appeared that settlement was possible. But General Smuts again evaded and the tension became more when in 1913 a measure was introduced into the Union Parliament exempting women only from its operation, Mr. Gandhi wired to Mr. Gokhale asking whether the promise of repeal was limited to women only. Mr. Gokhale replied that it applied to all who were affected by the tax. Mr. Gandhi reminded the Union Government of the promise and asked for a definite undertaking to repeal it in 1914. The Union Government declined. It was then that Mr. Gandhi organised the great movement advising indentured Indians to suspend work till the tax was repealed. Under his lead the Indian labourers gathered in thousands and they passed mine after mine adding to their numbers. Then commenced the historic march into the Transvaal allowing themselves to be freely arrested. The Government hoping to demoralise the Indians issued a warrant to arrest Mr. Gandhi.

Mr. Gandhi was on the 11th November 1913 charged on three counts before the Resident Magistrate, Mr. J. W. Cross, of Dundee, with inducing indentured immigrants to leave the Province. The Court was crowded with Indians and Europeans. Mr. W. Dalzell-Turnbull was specially instructed by the Attorney-General to appear for the prosecution, and Mr. J. W. Godfrey, Advocate, appeared for Mr. Gandhi. Mr. Gandhi pleaded guilty to the charges.

Mr. Turnbull read the section and left the matter in the hands of the Magistrate.

Mr. Godfrey stated that he was under an obligation to the defendant not to plead in mitigation in any way whatsoever. The circumstances which had brought Mr. Gandhi before the Magistrate were well known to all persons, and he was only expressing the desire of the defendant when he stated that the Magistrate had a duty to perform and that he was expected to perform that duty fearlessly and should therefore not hesitate to impose the highest sentence upon the prisoner if he felt that the circumstances in the case justified it.

Mr. Gandhi obtained the permission of the Court and made the following statement:

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As a member of the profession and being an old resident of Natal, he thought that, in justice to himself and the public, he should state that the counts against him were of such a nature that he took the responsibility imposed upon him, for he believed that the demonstration for which these people were taken out of the Colony was one for a worthy object. He felt that he should say that he had nothing against the employers and regretted that in this campaign serious losses were being caused to them. He appealed to the employers also, and he felt that the tax was one which was heavily weighing down his countrymen and should be removed. He also felt that he was in honour bound, in view of the position of things between Mr. Smuts and Professor Gokhale, to produce a striking demonstration. He was aware of the miseries caused to the women and babes in arms. On the whole he felt he had not gone beyond the principles and honour of the profession of which he was a member. He felt that he had only done his duty in advising his countrymen and it was his duty to advise them again, that, until the tax were removed, to leave work and subsist upon rations obtained by charity. He was certain that without suffering it was not possible for them to get their grievance remedied.

The Magistrate finally in pronouncing sentence said :

It was a painful duty to pass a sentence upon the conduct of a gentleman like Mr. Gandhi, upon the deliberate contravention of the law, but he had a duty to perform, and Mr. Godfrey, his counsel, had asked him fearlessly to perform that duty. The accused having pleaded guilty, he (the Magistrate) accepted that plea and passed the following sentences: Count 1, £20, or three months' imprisonment with hard labour; Count 2, £20, or three months' imprisonment with hard labour, to take effect upon the expiration of the sentence in respect to count 1; Count 3, £20, or three months' imprisonment with hard labour, this to take effect upon the expiration of the sentence imposed in count 2.

Mr. Gandhi, in a clear and calm voice, said :

"I elect to go to gaol."

## THE SOLOMON COMMISSION

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While Mr. Gandhi and his compatriots were suffering in jail, his countrymen in India, under the guidance of Mr. Gokhale, continued to render all possible assistance to keep up the firm attitude of the South African Indians. Money was raised in thousands for the help of the distressed in South Africa. And in December 1913, Lord Hardinge's famous speech in Madras opened the eyes of the Imperial Government to the gravity of the situation created by the Union Government. Soon after, a Royal Commission to enquire into the condition of Indians in South Africa was appointed. In view of the forthcoming Commission's enquiry, Mr. Gandhi and his colleagues were released from prison. Soon after release, Mr. Gandhi made the following statement:

We were discharged unconditionally on the 18th instaut on the recommendation of the Commission. We were not told at the time of our relief why we were being relieved. It is not true that after relief we went to Pretoria to see the Ministers. Knowing as we do the feelings of Mr. Esselen and Colonel Wylie towards Indians, it is impossible for us not to feel strongly that the Commission has not been appointed to give us fair play, but it is a packed body and intended to hoodwink the Government and the public both in England and in India. The Chairman's integrity and impartiality is undoubted, but Mr. Esselen and Colonel Wylie are well known and admitted generally to be amongst the strongest and most violent opponents of Indians in South Africa. Mr. Esselen has emphatically declared from the public platform on many occasions extreme anti-Asiatic views and is so intimately related politically to the Union Ministers that he is regarded here practically as a non-official member of the Ministry. Only recently he expressed himself, privately, most offensively about the Indians to a member of the Union Parliament, named Mr. Meyleg, who has publicly



protested against his appointment. Colonel Wylie has been our bitterest opponent in Natal for more than twenty years. So far back as 1896 he led a mob to demonstrate against the landing of Indians who had arrived at Durban in two vessels, advocated at a public meeting the sinking of the ships with all Indians on board and commending a remark made by another speaker that he would willingly put down one month's pay for one shot at the Indians, and asked how many were prepared to put down similarly a month's pay on those terms; and he has consistently been our enemy all these years. Moreover, he is Colonel of the Defence Force whose acts are the subjects of inquiry and he is also the Legal Adviser of many estate owners and during the present agitation he has openly said that the £3 tax ought not to be repealed.

The Commission is not merely judicial but also political, investigating not only the facts as to ill-treatment but also recommending a policy for the future, and it is impossible that the Chairman will control the views of his colleagues in matters of policy. The appointment of Messrs. Esselen and Wylie to investigate our grievances and to stigmatise our protests against their appointment as an unwarranted reflection on their impartiality is to add insult to injury. Almost the entire South African Press admits the reasonableness of our suggestions as to the additional members. Ministers of religion and other European friends are working to remove the present deadlock and secure us fair play. We would be prepared to lead evidence before Sir William Solomon alone if it was a question merely of enquiring into the charges of flogging, acts of military and other ill-treatment, but this inquiry includes an examination of grievances also. Before our release, public meetings had

been held at all Indian centres throughout South Africa protesting strongly against the personnel of the Commission and urging the appointment of Mr. Schreiner and Judge Rose-Innes to counterbalance Messrs. Esselen and Wylie. Immediately on our release, as soon as we took the situation in, we addressed a letter to the Ministry asking for these additions to the Commission. Objection has been taken to the form in which this request was put forward by us, but we are confronted with a terrible crisis and it is not easy always to weigh carefully the niceties of form at such a juncture. The Indian position has always been to insist on the community being consulted at least informally regarding matters vitally affecting it since it is voteless.

In the constitution of the present Commission, Indian sentiment not only was not consulted but was contemptuously trampled on. During the recent deadlock in connection with the European railwaymen's grievances, the men were permitted to choose their nominee by a referendum. We merely asked for informal consultation when we were released.

We found that the indignation of our countrymen was at white heat owing to floggings which had been seen with their own eyes, shooting which they believed to be unjustified and other acts of ill-treatment, and this indignation was further intensified by the harrowing accounts of prison treatment which the passive resisters, including ladies who were released at this time on the expiry of their sentences, gave to the community. In all our experience of prison treatment in this country never have we been treated before with such unparalleled cruelty. Insults by warders, frequent assaults by Zulu warders, with the holding off of blankets and other necessary articles,

with the end of that struggle, and that he should accept some mourning not only inwardly but outwardly as well, as a humble example to his fellow-countrymen so that he could tell them that it was necessary for them to show by their conduct and outward appearance that they were in mourning. He was not prepared himself to accept the European mourning dress for this purpose, and with some modification in deference to the feelings of his European friends, he had adopted the dress similar to that of an indentured Indian. He asked his fellow-countrymen to adopt some sign of mourning to show to the world that they were mourning and further to adopt some inward observance also. And perhaps he might tell them what his inward mourning was—to restrict himself to one meal a day. They had been released, he continued, not on any condition but they knew that they were released on the recommendation of a Commission appointed by the Government in order that every facility might be given not only to them but to the Indian community to bring before the Commission any evidence that community might have in its possession. He thought it a right and proper thing that the Government had appointed a Commission, but he thought the Commission was open to the gravest objection from the Indian standpoint, and he was there to tender his humble advice to them that it was impossible to accept the Commission in a form in which the Indians had no voice. They were fighting for so many grievances, and the underlying spirit of the struggle was to obtain full recognition, on the part of the Government, of the right of consultation in anything which appertained to Indian interests. Unless the Government was prepared to condescend to that extent, unless they were prepared to ascertain and respect the Indian

not possible for Indians as loyal but  
 Though Mr. Ganley the Empire to render obedience to their  
 Commission, his denials were never extravagant which they might have passed over  
 they had to labour. This was one of the serious fundamental  
 Within those limits the other objection was that it was a partisan  
 to interference. He wrote early therefore the Indians wanted their own

You impute it. This they might not get, but they at least  
 the contented impartial men who had not expressed opinions  
 the life to their interests, but gentlemen who would be able  
 to bring to the deliberations of the Commission an open,  
 just and impartial mind. (*Applause.*) He considered that  
 Mr. Esslen and Mr. Wylie, honourable gentlemen as they  
 were, could not possibly bring open minds to hear on the  
 inquiry for the simple reason that they had their own  
 human limitations and could not divest themselves of their  
 anti-Asiatic views which they had expressed times without  
 number. If the Government appointed the Indians'  
 nominees and thus honoured their sentiments and granted  
 a release for the prisoners now in gaol, he thought it would  
 be possible for them to assist the Government and  
 therefore the Empire and bring, perhaps, this crisis to an  
 end without further suffering. But it might be that they  
 might have to undergo further suffering. It might be that  
 their sins were so great that they might have to do still  
 further penance. "Therefore I hope you will hold  
 yourselves in readiness," he proceeded, "to respond to the  
 call the Government may make by declining our just and  
 reasonable requests and then to again force the pace by  
 again undergoing still greater purifying suffering until at  
 last the Government may order the military to riddle us  
 also with their bullets. My friends, are you prepared for  
 this? (*Voices: "Yes."*) Are you prepared to share the  
 fate of those of our countrymen whom the cold stone is

resting upon to-day? Are you prepared that he should accept of "Yes.") Then, if the Government outwardly as well, request, this is the proposition I wish to trymen so that he this morning. That all of us, on the first for them to show Year, should be ready again to suffer battle, that they were imprisonment and march out. (*Applause.*) self to accept only process of purification and will be a se, and with mourning both inwardly and outwardly which -gs of his justification before our God. That is the advice we s that to our free and indentured countrymen—to strike, and even though this may mean death to them, I am sure it will be justified." But if they accepted the quiet life, he went on, not only would the wrath of God descend upon them but they would incur the disgrace of the whole of that portion of the European world forming the British Empire. (*Applause.*) He hoped that every man, woman and grown-up child would hold themselves in readiness to do this. He hoped they would not consider self, that they would not consider their salaries, trades, or even families, their own bodies in the struggle which was to his mind a struggle for human liberty, and therefore a struggle for the religion to which they might respectively belong. It was essentially a religious struggle—(*hear, hear*)—as any struggle involving assertion and freedom of their conscience must be a religious struggle. He therefore hoped they would hold themselves in readiness to respond to the call and not listen to the advice of those who wavered, nor listen to those who asked them to wait, or to those who might ask them to refrain from the battle. The struggle was one involving quite a clear issue and an incredibly simple one. "Do not listen to any one," he concluded, "but obey your own conscience and go forward without thinking. Now is the time for thinking and having made up your minds stick to it, even unto death." (*Applause.*)

## INDIANS AND FULL CITIZEN RIGHTS

Though Mr. Gandhi declined to participate in the Solomon Commission, his demands on behalf of the South African Indians were never extravagant. He realised the limitations under which they had to labour and he defined the limits of their ambition. Within those limits, however, he was determined to offer resistance to interference. Replying to the criticisms of the *Natal Mercury*, he wrote early in January 1914:

You imagine that a more potent reason for delaying the contemplated march is to be found in the fact that the mass of the local Indian community could not be relied upon to join in the resuscitation of a form of conflict which recoiled most injuriously upon the Indians themselves. There are other inferences also you have drawn from the delay with which I shall not deal at present. I, however, assure you that you are wrongly informed if you consider that the mass of the local Indian community is not to be relied upon to join the march if it has ever to be undertaken. On the contrary the difficulty to-day is even to delay it, and my co-workers and I have been obliged to send special messengers and to issue special leaflets in order to advise the people that the march must be postponed for the time being. I admit that speculation as to whether the mass of the local Indian community will or will not join the march is fruitless, because this will be, if it has to be, put to the test at no distant date. I give my own view in order that the public may not be lulled into a sense of false belief that the movement is confined to a few only among the community.

The chief reason, therefore, for trespassing upon your courtesy is to inform the South African public through your columns that whilst the great National Congress that has just closed its session at Karachi was fully justified in asking, and was bound to ask, for full

citizen rights throughout the British Dominions for all the King's subjects, irrespective of caste, colour, or creed, and whilst they may not and ought not to be bound by local considerations, we in South Africa have repeatedly made it clear that, as sane people, we are bound to limit our ambition by local circumstances, we are bound to recognise the widespread prejudice, however unjustified it may be and, having done so, we have declared—and I venture to re-declare through your columns—that my co-workers and I shall not be a party to any agitation which has for its object the free and unrestricted immigration of British Indians into the Union or the attainment of the political franchise in the near future. That these rights must come in time will, I suppose, be admitted by all, but when they do come they will not be obtained by forcing the pace, as passive resistance is undoubtedly calculated to do, but by otherwise educating public opinion, and by the Indian community so acquitting itself in the discharge of all the obligations that flow from citizenship of the British Empire as to have these rights given to them as a matter of course. Meanwhile, so far as my advice counts for anything, I can only suggest that the efforts of the Indian community should be concentrated upon gaining or regaining every lost civil right or every such right at present withheld from the community; and I hold that even this will not happen unless we are ready to make an effective protest against our civil destruction by means of passive resistance, and unless through our self-suffering we have demonstrated to the European public that we are a people that cherishes its honour and self-respect as dearly as any people on earth.

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## A TRUCE WITH THE GOVERNMENT

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The following letter from Mr. Gandhi to the Government places on record the agreement arrived at as a result of a series of interviews with the Minister at Pretoria. It was dated Pretoria, January 21, 1914:

Before leaving for Phoenix, I venture to express my thanks to General Smuts for the patient and kind interviews that he has been pleased to grant me during this time of overwhelming pressure. My countrymen will remember with gratitude his great consideration.

I understand that the Minister is unable to accept (with regard to the Indian Inquiry Commission) either 1. my suggestion that a member representing Indian interests should be co-opted when questions of policy are inquired into, or 2. my suggestion that a second Commission with Indian representation should be appointed to deal with those questions only, the present Commission in that case becoming purely judicial, I submitted a third proposal also which, in view of the Government's decision, I need not state here. Had any of my suggestions been viewed favourably by the Government, it would have been possible for my countrymen to assist the labours of the Commission. But with regard to leading evidence before this Commission which has a political as well as a judicial character, they have conscientious scruples, and these have taken with them a solemn and religious form. I may state briefly that these scruples were based on the strong feeling that the Indian community should have been either consulted or represented where questions of policy were concerned.

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The Minister, I observe, appreciates these scruples and regards them as honourable but is unable to alter his decision. As, however, by granting me the recent interviews, he has been pleased to accept the principle of consultation, it enables me to advise my countrymen not to hamper the labour of the Commission by any active propaganda and not to render the position of the Government difficult by reviving passive resistance pending the result of the Commission and the introduction of legislation during the forthcoming session.

If I am right in my interpretation of the Government's attitude on the principle of consultation, it would be further possible for us to assist Sir Benjamin Robertson, whom the Viceroy, with gracious forethought, has deputed to give evidence before the Commission.

A word is here necessary on the question of allegations as to ill-treatment during the progress of the Indian strike in Natal. For the reasons above stated, the avenue of proving them through the Commission is closed to us. I am personally unwilling to challenge libel proceedings by publishing the authentic evidence in our possession and would far rather refrain altogether from raking up old sores. I beg to assure the Minister that, as passive resisters, we endeavour to avoid, as far as possible, any resentment of personal wrongs. But in order that our silence may not be mistaken, may I ask the Minister to recognise our motive and reciprocate by not leading evidence of a negative character before the Commission on the allegations in question.

Suspension of passive resistance, moreover, carries with it a prayer for the release of the passive resistance prisoners now undergoing imprisonment, either in the

ordinary gaols or the mine compounds which might have been declared as such.

Finally, it might not be out of place here to recapitulate the points on which relief has been sought. They are as follows :

1. Repeal of the £3 tax in such a manner that the Indians relieved will occupy virtually the same status as the indentured Indians discharged under the Natal Law 25 of 1891.

- 2. The marriage question. (These two are the points, as I have verbally submitted which require fresh legislation.)

3. The Cape entry question. (This requires only administrative relief subject to the clear safeguards explained to the Minister.)

4. The Orange Free State question. (This requires merely a verbal alteration in the assurance already given.)

5. An assurance that the existing laws especially affecting Indians will be administered justly with due regard to vested rights.

I venture to suggest that Nos. 3, 4 and 5 present no special difficulty and that the needful relief may be now given on these points as an earnest of the good intentions of the Government regarding the resident Indian population.

If the Minister, as I trust and hope, views my submission with favour, I shall be prepared to advise my countrymen in accordance with the tenor of this letter.

## THE SETTLEMENT

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The passing of the Indian Relief Act in July 1924, in the Union Houses of Parliament brought a sigh of relief to the whole Indian population both in South Africa and in India. The abolition of the £3 tax, the legislation on the marriage question and the removal of the racial bar were distinctly to the advantage of the Indians and on the lines recommended by the Commission. But there were certain other administrative matters which were not included in the Relief Bill but which were of equal importance to constitute a complete settlement. Mr. Gandhi submitted a list of reforms in the desired directions which General Smuts discussed in a letter addressed to Mr. Gandhi under date 30th June. On the same day Mr. Gandhi sent the following reply:

I beg to acknowledge receipt of your letter of even date herewith setting forth the substance of the interview that General Smuts was pleased, notwithstanding many other pressing calls upon his time, to grant me on Saturday last. I feel deeply grateful for the patience and courtesy which the Minister showed during the discussion of the several points submitted by me.

The passing of the Indians' Relief Bill and this correspondence finally closed that Passive Resistance struggle which commenced in the September of 1906 and which to the Indian community cost much physical suffering and pecuniary loss and to the Government much anxious thought and consideration.

As the Minister is aware, some of my countrymen have wished me to go further. They are dissatisfied that the trade licenses laws of the different Provinces, the Transvaal Gold Law, the Transvaal Townships Act, the Transvaal Law 3 of 1885, have not been altered so as to give them full rights of residence, trade and ownership of land. Some of them are dissatisfied that full

inter-provincial migration is not permitted, and some are dissatisfied that on the marriage question the Relief Bill goes no further than it does. They have asked me that all the above matters might be included in the Passive Resistance struggle. I have been unable to comply with their wishes. Whilst, therefore, they have not been included in the programme of Passive Resistance, it will not be denied that some day or other these matters will require further and sympathetic consideration by the Government. Complete satisfaction cannot be expected until full civic rights have been conceded to the resident Indian population.

I have told my countrymen that they will have to exercise patience and by all honourable means at their disposal educate public opinion so as to enable the Government of the day to go further than the present correspondence does. I shall hope that when the Europeans of South Africa fully appreciate the fact that now, as the importation of indentured labour from India is prohibited and as the Immigrants' Regulation Act of last year has in practice all but stopped further free Indian immigration and that my countrymen do not aspire to any political ambition, they, the Europeans, will see the justice and indeed the necessity of my countrymen being granted the rights I have just referred to.

Meanwhile, if the generous spirit that the Government have applied to the treatment of the problem during the past few months continues to be applied, as promised in your letter, in the administration of the existing laws, I am quite certain that the Indian community throughout the Union will be able to enjoy some measure of peace and never be a source of trouble to the Government.

## FAREWELL SPEECH AT DURBAN

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On the eve of their departure from South Africa, Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi were the recipients of innumerable addresses from every class of South African residents: Hindus, Mahomedans, Parsis and Europeans. Mr. Gandhi replied to each one of these addresses in suitable terms.

On Wednesday the 18th July 1914, Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi were entertained at a great gathering of Indian and European residents at the Town Hall, Durban, which was presided over by the Mayor, Mr. W. Holmes. Telegrams were read from the Bishop of Natal, General Botha, Messrs. Smuts, Merriman, Burton, Hoskin and others. The Mayor and several speakers eulogised the services of Mr. Gandhi.

Referring to the addresses which had been presented to him, he said that, while he valued them, he valued more the love and sympathy which the addresses had expressed. He did not know that he would be able to make adequate compensation. He did not deserve all the praise bestowed upon him. Nor did his wife claim to deserve all that had been said of her. Many an Indian woman had done greater service during the struggle than Mrs. Gandhi. He thanked the community on behalf of Mr. Kallenbach, who was another brother to him, for the addresses presented. The community had done well in recognising Mr. Kallenbach's worth. Mr. Kallenbach would tell them that he came to the struggle to gain. He considered that, by taking up their cause, he gained a great deal in the truest sense. Mr. Kallenbach had done splendid work during the strike at Newcastle and, when the time came, he cheerfully went to prison, again thinking that he was the gainer and not the loser. Proceeding, Mr. Gandhi referred to the time of his arrival in 1897 when his friend Mr. Laughton had stood by him against the mob. He also remembered with

gratefulness the action of Mrs. Alexander, the wife of the late Superintendent of Police in Durban, who protected him with her umbrella from the missiles thrown by the excited crowd. Referring to passive resistance, he claimed that it was a weapon of the purest type. It was not the weapon of the weak. It was needed, in his opinion, far greater courage to be a passive resister than a physical resister. It was the courage of a Jesus, a Daniel, a Cranmer, a Latimer and a Ridley who could go calmly to suffering and death, and the courage of a Tolstoy who dared to defy the Czars of Russia, that stood out as the greatest. Mr. Gandhi said he knew the Mayor had received some telegrams stating that the Indians' Relief Bill was not satisfactory. It would be a singular thing if in this world they would be able to get anything that satisfied everybody, but in the condition of things in South Africa at the present time, he was certain they could not have had a better measure. "I do not claim the credit for it," Mr. Gandhi remarked. "It is rather due to the women and young people like Nsgappan, Narayanasamy, and Valliammah who have died for the cause and to those who quickened the conscience of South Africa. Our thanks are due also to the Union Government. General Botha showed the greatest statesmanship when he said his Government would stand or fall by this measure. I followed the whole of that historic debate—historic to me, historic to my countrymen and possibly historic to South Africa and the world." Proceeding, Mr. Gandhi said that it was well known to them how the Government had done justice, and how the Opposition had come to their assistance. They had also received handsome help from both the Imperial and Indian Governments, backed by that generous

Viceroy, Lord Hardinge. (*Cheers.*) The manner in which India, led by their great and distinguished countryman, Mr. Gokhale, had responded to the cry which came from the hearts of thousands of their countrymen in South Africa, was one of the results of the passive resistance movement and left, he hoped, no bitter traces or bitter memories. (*Applause.*) "This assurance," continued Mr. Gandhi, "I wish to give. I go away with no ill-will against a single European. I have received many hard knocks in my life, but here I admit that I have received those most precious gifts from Europeans—love and sympathy." (*Cheers.*) This settlement, he said, had been achieved after an eight years' struggle. The Indians in South Africa had never aspired to any political ambition, and as regards the social question, that could never arise in connection with the Indians. "I do not hold for one moment," Mr. Gandhi exclaimed, "that East and West cannot combine. I think the day is coming when East must meet West, or West meet East, but I think the social evolution of the West to-day lies in one channel, and that of the Indian in another channel. The Indians have no wish to-day to encroach on the social institutions of the European in South Africa. (*Cheers.*) Most Indians are natural traders. There are bound to be trade jealousies and those various things that come from competition. I have never been able to find a solution of this most difficult problem which will require the broad-mindedness and spirit of justice of the Government of South Africa to hold the balance between conflicting interests." Referring to his stay in South Africa, Mr. Gandhi said that he should retain the most sacred memories of this land. He had been fortunate in forming the happiest and most lasting friendships with both Europeans and Indians. He

was now returning to India—a holy land sanctified by the austerities of the ages. In conclusion, Mr. Gandhi hoped that the same love and sympathy which had been given to him in South Africa might be extended to him, no matter in what part of the world he might be. He hoped that the settlement embodied in the Indians' Relief Bill would be carried out in a spirit of broad-mindedness and justice in the administration of the laws lately passed in connection with the affairs of the Indian community. "Then," added Mr. Gandhi, "I think there will be no fear on the part of my countrymen in their social evolution. That is one of the lessons of the settlement."



## ADDRESS TO THE INDENTURED INDIANS

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The following is the text of Mr. Gandhi's address to Indentured Indians at Verulam, on the 12th July 1914 :

Please understand, my indentured countrymen, that it is wrong for you to consider that relief has been obtained because I or you have gone to gaol, but because you had the courage to give up your life and sacrifice yourselves and in this instance I have also to tell you that many causes led to this result. I have to specially refer to the valuable assistance rendered by the Hon. Senator Marshall Campbell. I think that your thanks and my thanks are due to him for his work in the Senate while the Bill was passing through it. The relief is of this nature: the £3 tax you will not have to pay and arrears will be remitted. It does not mean that you are free from your present indentures. You are bound to go through your present indentures faithfully and honestly, but when these finish you are just as free as any other free Indian under Act 25, 1891 and can receive the same protection as set forth in that Act. You are not bound to re-indenture or return to India. Discharge certificates will be issued to you free of charge. If you want to go to India and return therefrom, you must first spend three years in Natal as free Indians. If you, being poor, want assistance to enable you to go to India, you can get it on application to the Government, but in that case you would not be allowed to return. If you want to return, fight shy of this assistance and use your own money or borrow from your friends. If you re-indenture you come under the same law, namely, Act 25 of 1891. My advice to you is: Do not

re-indenture but by all means serve your present masters under the common law of the country. Now in the event of any occasion arising which I hope it will not do, you will know what is necessary. . . . .

Victoria County has not been as free from violence as the Newcastle district was. You retaliated. I do not care whether it was under provocation or not, but you retaliated and have used sticks and stones, and you have burnt sugar-cane. That is not passive resistance. If I had been in your midst, I would have repudiated you and allowed rather my own head to be broken than allow a single stick or stone to be used. Passive resistance is a more powerful weapon than all the sticks, stones, and gunpowder in the world. If imposed upon, you must suffer even unto death. That is passive resistance. If, therefore, I was an indentured Indian working for the Hon. Mr. Marshall Campbell, Mr. Saunders or other employer and if I found my treatment not just, I would not go to the Protector—I would go to my master and ask for justice, and if he would not grant it, I would say that I would remain there without food or drink until it was granted. I am quite sure that the stoniest heart will be melted by passive resistance. Let this sink deeply into yourselves. This is a sovereign and most effective remedy. . . . .

I shall now say my farewell to Verulam and you all. The scene before me will not fade in my memory be the distance ever so great. May God help you all in your trouble! May your own conduct be such that God may find it possible to help you!

## ADDRESS TO THE TAMIL COMMUNITY

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On the 15th July 1914, at the West-End Bioscope Hall, Johannesburg, Mr. Gandhi addressed a meeting of the Tamil community, including many ladies.

Mr. Gandhi said that he felt, in coming to meet the Tamil brothers and sisters, as if he came to meet blood relations. That was a sentiment which he had cherished now for many years and the reason was quite simple. Of all the different sections of the Indian community, he thought that the Tamil had borne the brunt of the struggle. The largest number of deaths that passive resistance had taken had been from the Tamil community. They had that morning gone to the cemetery to perform the unveiling ceremony in connection with the two memorials to a dear sister and brother. Both of these had been Tamils. There was Narayansamy whose bones lay at Delagoa Bay. He had been a Tamil. The deportees had been Tamils. The last to fight and come out of gaol had been Tamils. Those who were ruined hawkers were all Tamils. The majority of the passive resisters at Tolstoy Farm had been Tamils. On every side, Tamils had shown themselves to be most typical of the best traditions of India and by saying that he was not exaggerating in the slightest degree. The faith, the abundant faith in God, in Truth, that the Tamils had shown, had been one of the most sustaining forces throughout those long-drawn years. The majority of women to go to gaol were Tamils. The sisters who defied the authorities to arrest them and had gone from door to door, from barracks to barracks at Newcastle, to ask the men to lay down their tools and strike work—who were they? Again, Tamil sisters. Who marched among the women? Tamils, of course. Who lived on a pound loaf of bread and an ounce of sugar? The majority were Tamils

though there he must give their due also to those of their countrymen who were called Calcutta men. In that last struggle they also had responded nobly but he was not able to say quite so nobly as the Tamils; but they had certainly come out almost as well as the Tamils had, but the Tamils had sustained the struggle for the last eight years and had shown of what stuff they were made from the very beginning. Here in Johannesburg they were a handful, and yet, even numerically, they would show, he thought, the largest number who had gone to gaol again and again; also if they wanted imprisonment wholesale, it came from the Tamils. So that he felt when he came to a Tamil meeting that he came to blood relations. The Tamils had shown so much pluck, so much faith, so much devotion to duty and such noble simplicity and yet had been so self-effacing. He did not even speak their language much as he should like to be able to do so, and yet they had simply fought on. It had been a glorious, a rich experience which he would treasure to the end of his life. How should he explain the settlement to them? They did not even want it. But if he must, he could only tell them that all that they and theirs had fought for had been obtained and obtained largely through the force of character that they had shown; and yet they did not want, they had not wanted to reap the reward except the reward that their own consciences would offer them. They had fought for the Cape entry right for colonial borns. That they had got. They had fought for the just administration of the laws. That they had got. They had fought for the removal of the racial taint in the law with reference to the Free State. That they had got. The £3 tax was now a matter of the past. And with reference to the marriage question,

all those dear sisters who had gone to gaol now could be called the wives of their husbands, whilst but yesterday they might have been called so out of courtesy by a friend but were not so in the eye of the law. That was one of the things they had fought for and had got. Truth was what they had been fighting for, and Truth had conquered—not he or they. They might fight to-morrow for an unrighteous thing, and as sure as fate they would be beaten and well-beaten. Truth was unconquerable, and whenever the call to duty came he hoped they would respond. There was one thing more. They had sometimes, as every other section of the community had, jealousies amongst themselves. They had petty jealousies not in connection with the struggle but in matters which had nothing to do with the struggle. All those petty jealousies and differences, he hoped, would go, and they would rise higher still in the estimation of themselves and of those who at all grew to know them and the depth of character which they had. They had also, as all sections of the Indian community had, not only those jealousies but sometimes many bickerings also and petty quarrels. He felt these also should be removed especially from their midst, because they had shown themselves so fit to give themselves to the Motherland. And here, of course, it was a Tamil who had given his four sons to be trained as servants of India. He hoped Mr. and Mrs. Naidu knew exactly what they had done. They had surrendered all rights to those children for life, and they could not possibly do anything to advance their material well-being but had always to remain servants of India. It was no joke, and yet Mr. and Mrs. Naidu had certainly done that. He could not appeal to them too strongly that they of all sections should rid

themselves of all those bickerings, petty jealousies and quarrels amongst themselves. He would also ask them whenever they chose a President or a Chairman to obey him, to follow him, and not always listen to the views of this or that man. If they did that, their usefulness would be curtailed. And then too they should not worry if others and not they might reap the reward. Their reward would be all the greater if it was not of this earth; they were not fighting for material reward, and a true passive resister never thought of material reward. They should not worry about material prosperity but always have higher things before them. Then indeed they would be like the eleven working in the community which could raise the community as one to look up to. The privilege was certainly theirs and time also was at their disposal, and if they make good use of that time it would be a splendid thing for the whole of South Africa and would certainly be a splendid thing for them; and if he heard in India that all those little things to which he had drawn attention had also been got rid of by the Indian community he would indeed be rejoiced. One thing more. He had known something of Madras, and how sharp caste distinctions were there. He felt they would have come to South Africa in vain if they were to carry those caste prejudices with them. The caste system had its uses but that was an abuse. If they carried caste distinctions to that ravenous extent and drew those distinctions and called one another high and low and so on, those things would be their ruin. They should remember that they were not high caste or low caste but all Indians, all Tamils. He said Tamils, but that was also applicable to the whole Indian community, but most to them because most was certainly expected of them.

## FAREWELL SPEECH AT JOHANNESBURG

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At Johannesburg, Mr. Gandhi was the recipient of numerous addresses from Hindus, Parsis, Mahomedans, Europeans and other important communities. Indeed every class of people and every important Association presented a separate address. Mr. Gandhi made a touching reply to them :

Johannesburg was not a new place to him. He saw many friendly faces there, many who had worked with him in many struggles in Johannesburg. He had gone through much in life. A great deal of depression and sorrow had been his lot, but he had also learnt during all those years to love Johannesburg even though it was a mining camp. It was in Johannesburg that he had found his most precious friends. It was in Johannesburg that the foundation for the great struggle of Passive Resistance was laid in the September of 1906. It was in Johannesburg that he had found a friend, a guide, and a biographer in the late Mr. Doke. It was in Johannesburg that he had found in Mrs. Doke a loving sister, who had nursed him back to life when he had been assaulted by a countryman who had misunderstood his mission and who misunderstood what he had done. It was in Johannesburg that he had found a Kallenbach, a Polak, a Miss Schlesin, and many another who had always helped him and had always cheered him and his countrymen. Johannesburg, therefore, had the holiest associations of all the holy associations that Mrs. Gandhi and he would carry back to India, and, as he had already said on many another platform, South Africa, next to India, would be the holiest land to him and Mrs. Gandhi and to his children ; for, in spite of all the bitternesses, it had given

them those lifelong companions. It was in Johannesburg again that the European Committee had been formed when Indians were going through the darkest stage in their history, presided over them, as it still was, by Mr. Hosken. It was last, but not least, Johannesburg that had given Valliamma, that young girl whose picture rose before him even as he spoke, who had died in the cause of truth. Simple-minded in faith—she had not the knowledge that he had, she did not know what passive resistance was, she did not know what it was the community would gain, but she was simply taken up with unbounded enthusiasm for her people—went to gaol, came out of it a wreck and within a few days died. It was Johannesburg again that produced a Naggappan and Narayansamy, two lovely youths hardly out of their teens who also died. But both Mrs. Gandhi and he stood living before them. He and Mrs. Gandhi had worked in the limelight; those others had worked behind the scenes, not knowing where they were going except this that what they were doing was right and proper and, if any praise was due anywhere at all, it was due to those three who died. They had had the name of Harbatsingh given to them. He (the speaker) had had the privilege of serving imprisonment with them. Harbatsingh was 75 years old. He was an ex-indentured Indian, and when he (the speaker) asked him why he had come there, that he had gone there to seek his grave, the brave man replied: "What does it matter? I know what you are fighting for. You have not to pay the £3 tax, but my fellow ex-indentured Indians have to pay that tax, and what more glorious death could I meet?" He had met that death in the gaol at Durban. No wonder if passive resistance had fired and quickened the conscience of South Africa!



But, proceeded Mr. Gandhi, he concurred with Mr. Duncan in an article he wrote some years ago when he truly analysed the struggle and said that behind that struggle for concrete rights lay the great spirit which asked for an abstract principle, and the fight which was undertaken in 1906, although it was a fight against a particular law, was a fight undertaken in order to combat the spirit that was seen about to overshadow the whole of South Africa and to undermine the glorious British Constitution, of which the Chairman had spoken so loftily that evening and about which he (the speaker) shared his views. It was his knowledge, right or wrong, of the British Constitution which bound him to the Empire. Tear that Constitution to shreds and his loyalty also would be torn to shreds. Keep that Constitution intact, and they held him bound a slave to that Constitution. He had felt that the choice lay for himself and his fellow-countrymen between two courses, when this spirit was brooding over South Africa, either to sunder themselves from the British Constitution or to fight in order that the ideals of that Constitution might be preserved—but only the ideals. Lord Amphil had said, in a preface to Mr. Doke's book, that the theory of the British Constitution must be preserved at any cost if the British Empire was to be saved from the mistakes that all the previous Empires had made. Practice might bend to the temporary aberration through which local circumstances might compel them to pass, it might bend before unreasoning or unreasonable prejudice, but theory once recognised could never be departed from, and this principle must be maintained at any cost. And it was that spirit which had been acknowledged now by the Union Government and acknowledged now nobly and loftily. The words that General Smuts so often emphasised still rang in

his ears. He had said : "Gandhi, this time we want no misunderstanding, we want no mental or other reservations, let all the cards be on the table, and I want you to tell me wherever you think that a particular passage or word does not read in accordance with your own reading," and it was so. That was the spirit in which he approached the negotiations. When he remembered General Smuts of a few years ago, when he told Lord Crewe that South Africa would not depart from its policy of racial distinction, that it was bound to retain that distinction, and that, therefore, the sting that lay in this Immigration Law would not be removed, many a friend, including Lord Ampthill, asked whether they could not for the time being suspend their activity. He had said "No". If they did that, it would undermine his loyalty, and even though he might be the only person he would still fight on. Lord Ampthill had congratulated him, and that great nobleman had never deserted the cause even when it was at its lowest ebb, and they saw the result that day. They had not by any means to congratulate themselves on a victory gained. There was no question of a victory gained, but the question of the establishment of the principle that, so far as the Union of South Africa at least was concerned, its legislation would never contain the racial taint, would never contain the colour disability. The practice would certainly be different. There was the Immigration Law. It recognised no racial distinctions but in practice they had arranged, they had given a promise that there should be no undue influx from India as to immigration. That was a concession to present prejudice. Whether it was right or wrong was not for him to discuss then. But it was the establishment of the principle which had made the struggle so important in the British Empire, and the establishment of that

principle which had made those sufferings perfectly justifiable and perfectly honourable, and he thought that when they considered the struggle from that standpoint, it was a perfectly dignified thing for any gathering to congratulate itself upon such a vindication of the principles of the British Constitution. One word of caution he wished to utter regarding the settlement. The settlement was honourable to both parties. He did not think there was any room left for misunderstanding, but whilst it was final in the sense that it closed the great struggle, it was not final in the sense that it gave to Indians all that they were entitled to. There was still the Gold Law which had many a sting in it. There was still the Licensing Laws throughout the Union which also contained many a sting. There was still a matter which the colonial born Indians especially could not understand or appreciate, namely, the water-tight compartments in which they had to live; whilst there was absolutely free inter-communication and inter-migration between the Provinces for Europeans, Indians had to be cooped up in their respective Provinces. Then there was undue restraint on their trading activity. There was the prohibition as to holding landed property in the Transvaal, which was degrading, and all these things took Indians into all kinds of undesirable channels. These restrictions would have to be removed. But for that, he thought, sufficient patience would have to be exercised. Time was now at their disposal and how wonderfully the tone had been changed! And here he had been told in Capetown and he believed it implicitly, the spirit of Mr. Andrews had pervaded all those statesmen and leading men whom he saw. He came and went away after a brief period, but he certainly fired those whom he saw with a sense of their duty to the Empire of

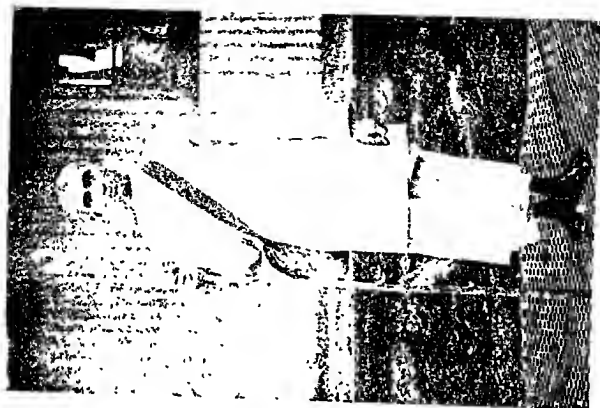
which they were members. But in any case to whatever circumstances that healthy tone was due, it had not escaped him. He had seen it amongst European friends whom he met at Capetown; he had seen it more fully in Durban, and this time it had been his privilege to meet many Europeans who were perfect strangers even on board the train, who had come smilingly forward to congratulate him on what they had called a great victory. Everywhere he had noticed that healthy tone. He asked European friends to continue that activity, either through the European committee or through other channels and to give his fellow-countrymen their help and extend that fellow-feeling to them also, so that they might be able to work out their own salvation.

To his countrymen he would say that they should wait and nurse the settlement which he considered was all that they could possibly and reasonably have expected, and that they would now live to see, with the co-operation of their European friends, that what was promised was fulfilled, that the administration of the existing laws was just, and that vested rights were respected in the administration; that after they had nursed these things, if they cultivated European public opinion, making it possible for the Government of the day to grant a restoration of the other rights of which they had been deprived, he did not think that there need be any fear about the future. He thought that, with mutual co-operation, with mutual goodwill, with due response on the part of either party, the Indian community need never be a source of weakness to that Government or to any Government. On the contrary he had full faith in his countrymen that if they were well-treated, they would always rise to the occasion and help the Government of

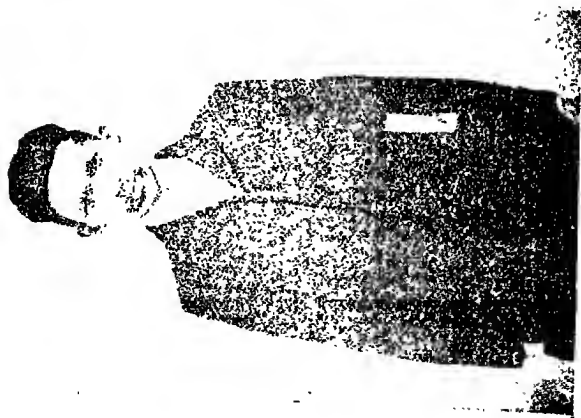
the day. If they had insisted on their rights on many an occasion, he hoped that the European friends who were there would remember that they had also discharged the responsibilities which had faced them.

And now it was time for him to close his remarks and say a few words of farewell only. He did not know how he could express those words. The best years of his life had been passed in South Africa. India, as his distinguished countryman, Mr. Gokhale, had reminded him, had become a strange land to him. South Africa, he knew, but not India. He did not know what impelled him to go to India, but he did know that the parting from them all, the parting from the European friends who had helped him through thick and thin, was a heavy blow, and one he was least able to bear, yet he knew he had to part from them. He could only say farewell and ask them to give him their blessing, to pray for them that their heads might not be turned by the praise they had received, that they might still know how to do their duty to the best of their ability, that they might still learn that first, second, and last should be the approbation of their own conscience, and that then whatever might be due to them would follow in its own time.—From "*The Souvenir of the Passive Resistance Movement in South Africa.*"





GANDHI IN 1914



GANDHI IN SOUTH AFRICA

## FAREWELL TO SOUTH AFRICA

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Just before leaving South Africa, Mr. Gandhi handed to Reuter's Agent at Capetown the following letter addressed to the Indian and European public of South Africa :

I would like on the eve of my departure for India to say a few words to my countrymen in South Africa and also to the European community. The kindness with which both European and Indian friends have overwhelmed me sends me to India a debtor to them. It is a debt I shall endeavour to repay by rendering in India what services I am capable of rendering there, and if in speaking about the South African Indian question I am obliged to refer to the injustices which my countrymen have received and may hereafter receive, I promise that I shall never wilfully exaggerate and shall state the truth and nothing but the truth.

A word about the settlement and what it means. In my humble opinion it is the Magna Charta of our liberty in this land. I give it the historic name, not because it gives us rights which we have never enjoyed and which are in themselves new or striking but because it has come to us after eight years' strenuous suffering that has involved the loss of material possessions and of precious lives. I call it our Magna Charta because it marks a change in the policy of the Government towards us and establishes our right not only to be consulted in matters affecting us but to have our reasonable wishes respected. It moreover confirms the theory of the British Constitution that there should be no legal racial inequality between different subjects of the Crown, no matter how much



practice may vary according to local circumstance. Above all, the settlement may well be called our Magna Charta, because it has vindicated passive resistance as a lawful clean weapon and has given in passive resistance a new strength to the community, and I consider it an infinitely superior force to that of the vote which history shows has often been turned against the voters themselves.

The settlement finally disposes of all the points that were the subject-matter of passive resistance and in doing so it breathes the spirit of justice and fair play. If the same spirit guides the administration of the existing laws, my countrymen will have comparative peace and South Africa will bear little of Indian problem in an acute form.

Some of my countrymen have protested against it. The number of these protestants is numerically very small and in influence not of great importance. They do not object to what has been granted but they object that it is not enough. It is impossible therefore to withhold sympathy from them. I have had an opportunity of speaking to them and I have endeavoured to show to them that if we had asked for anything more it would have been a breach of submission made on behalf of the British Indians in a letter addressed to the Government by Mr. Cachalia during the latter part of last year and we should have laid ourselves open to the charge of making new demands.

But I have also assured them that the present settlement does not preclude them from agitation as has been made clear in my letter to the Secretary of the Interior of the 16th ultimo for the removal of other disabilities which the community will still suffer from under the Gold Law, the Townships Act, the Law 3 of 1885 of the Transvaal and the Trade Licences Laws of Natal

and the Cape. The promise made by General Smuts to administer the existing law justly and with due regard to vested rights gives the community breathing time, but these laws are in themselves defective and can be, as they have been, turned into engines of oppression and instruments by indirect means to drive the resident Indian population from South Africa. The concession to popular prejudice in that we have reconciled ourselves to the almost total prohibition by administrative methods of a fresh influx of Indian immigrants and to the deprivation of all political power is, in my opinion, the utmost that could be reasonably expected from us. These two things being assured, I venture to submit that we are entitled to full rights of trade, inter-provincial migration, and ownership of landed property being restored in the not distant future. I leave South Africa in the hope that the healthy tone that pervades the European community in South Africa to-day will continue and that it will enable Europeans to recognise the inherent justice of our submission. To my countrymen I have, at various meetings that I have addressed during the past fortnight attended in several cases by thousands, said: "Nurse the settlement; see to it that the promises made are being carried out. Attend to development and progress from within. Zealously remove all causes which we may have given for the rise and growth of anti-Indian prejudice or agitation and patiently cultivate and inform European opinion so as to enable the Government of the day and Legislature to restore to us our rights." It is by mutual co-operation and goodwill that the solution of the balance of the pressing disabilities which were not made points for passive resistance may be obtained in the natural course and without trouble or agitation in an acute form.

The presence of a large indentured and ex-indentured Indian population in Natal is a grave problem. Compulsory repatriation is a physical and political impossibility, voluntary repatriation by way of granting free passages and similar inducements will not, as my experience teaches me, be availed of to any appreciable extent. The only real and effective remedy for the great State to adopt is to face responsibility fairly and squarely, to do away with the remnant of the system of indenture and to level up this part of the population and make use of it for the general welfare of the Union. Men and women who can effectively strike in large hodies, who can for a common purpose suffer untold hardships, who can, undisciplined though they are, be martyrs for days without police supervision and yet avoid doing any damage to property or person, and who can in times of need serve their King faithfully and capably, as the ambulance corps raised at the time of the late War and which had among other classes of Indians nearly 1,500 indentured Indians bore witness, are surely people who will, if given ordinary opportunities in life, form an honourable part of any nation.

If any class of persons have special claim to be considered, it is these indentured Indians and their children to whom South Africa has become either a land of adoption or of birth. They did not enter the Union as ordinary free immigrants but they came upon invitation, and indeed even after much coaxing by agents of South African employers of this class of labour. In this letter I have endeavoured as accurately and as fairly as is in my power to set forth the Indian situation and the extraordinary courtesy, kindness and sympathy that have been shown to me during the past month by so

many European friends. The frankness and generosity with which General Smuts, in the interview that he was pleased to grant me, approached the questions at issue and the importance that so many distinguished members of both Houses of Parliament attached to the Imperial aspect of the problem, give me ample reason for believing that my countrymen who have made South Africa their homes will receive a fairly full measure of justice and will be enabled to remain in the Union with self-respect and dignity.

Finally, in bidding good-bye to South Africa, I would like to apologise to so many friends on whom I have not been able, through extreme pressure of work, to call personally. I once more state that though I have received many a hard knock in my long stay in this country, it has been my good fortune to receive much personal kindness and consideration from hundreds of European friends, well-wishers and sympathisers. I have formed the closest friendships which will last for ever for this reason and for many similar reasons which I would love to reduce to writing but for fear of trespassing unduly upon the courtesy of the press. This sub-Continent has become to me a sacred and dear land next only to my Motherland. I leave the shores of South Africa with a heavy heart and the distance that will now separate me from South Africa will but draw me closer to it and its welfare will always be a matter of great concern and the love bestowed upon me by my countrymen and the generous forbearance and kindness extended to me by the Europeans will ever remain a most cherished treasure in my memory.

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## RECEPTION IN MADRAS

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Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi left for London in July 1914. On their arrival in England, they were welcomed at a great gathering of British and Indian friends and admirers at the Hotel Cecil on August 8. Letters of apology were received from the Prime Minister, the Marquis of Crewe, Earl Roberts, Lords Gladstone, Curzon, Lamington, Amptill, Harris, the Hon. Mr. Gokhale, Mr. Harcourt, Mr. Keir Hardie and Mr. Ramsay MacDonald. The Reception was arranged by the Hon. Mr. Bhupendranath Basu, the Rt. Hon. Mr. Ameer Ali and others who spoke on the occasion.

On the 14th August soon after the declaration of War, Mr. Gandhi with 50 other Indians resident in London addressed a communication to Lord Crewe, the Secretary of State for India, offering his services to the authorities. Mr. Gandhi organised the Indian Field Ambulance Corps with the help of leading Indians in England; but he fell ill and was nursed back to health by Mrs. Roberts, wife of Mr. Charles Roberts, the then Under-Secretary of State for India.

Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi then left for India and arrived in Bombay on the 9th January 1915. On the 12th a representative gathering of Bombay citizens assembled at Mount Petit to give them a fitting reception when the Hon. Sir Pherozeshah Mehta proposed the toast of the guests in a speech of moving eloquence. Sir Pherozeshah observed: "For the last few years the whole country has resounded with the tale of his (Gandhi's) great deeds and his trials, his courage and his high moral qualities, his labours and his sufferings in the cause of the Indians in South Africa, in enabling them to assert and to maintain their prestige, their honour and their self-respect". "It is enough," he went on to say, "if I tell you that we all regard Mr. Gandhi as a hero in the cause of Indian independence." "We are therefore proud of Mr. Gandhi and," he continued, "I will take leave to say that we are prouder still of her who ever stood by him in his trials and in his privations,—I mean Mrs. Gandhi, the heroine of South Africa." In March, Mr. Gandhi visited Calcutta and though mindful of "the command of his Guru the late Mr. Gokhale that for some time he should keep his ears open but his mouth shut," he gave expression to views which have since become thoroughly characteristic of him. Addressing the students of Calcutta with the Hon. Mr. Lyon in the chair, he told them that "politics should not be divorced from religion". He was there to tell them, he said, that if he was for sedition he must speak out sedition and think loudly and take the consequences. "It would then clear the atmosphere of any taint of hypocrisy." He denounced terrorism and called the anarchists misguided and urged them to a frank and open avowal of their faith. He was not a believer in government, for he held that "that government is the best that governs the least". But whatever his personal views, secret assassinations would do no good and

he warned them to beware of "these western methods and western evils". Such were the teachings he inculcated as he went from place to place. Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi came to Madras in April, where a great demonstration of welcome was awaiting them. The Indian South African League organised a splendid reception in their honour and at a great meeting held at the Victoria Public Hall on the 21st April 1915 with Dr. Sir S. Subrahmanya Iyer in the chair, a welcome address was read on behalf of the League by its Secretary, Mr. G. A. Natesan. Replying to the address, Mr. Gandhi said:

Mr. Chairman and Friends,—On behalf of my wife and myself I am deeply grateful for the great honour that you here in Madras, and may I say, this Presidency, have done to us and the affection that has been lavished upon us in this great and enlightened—not benighted—Presidency.

If there is anything that we have deserved, as has been stated in this beautiful address, I can only say I lay it at the feet of my Master under whose inspiration I have been working all this time under exile in South Africa. (*Hear, hear.*) In so far as the sentiments expressed in this address are merely prophetic, Sir, I accept them as a blessing and as a prayer from you and from this great meeting, that both my wife and I myself may possess the power, the inclination and the life to dedicate whatever we may develop in this sacred land of ours to the service of the Motherland. (*Cheers.*) It is no wonder that we have come to Madras. As my friend, Mr. Natesan, will perhaps tell you, we have been overdue and we have neglected Madras. But we have done nothing of the kind. We know that we had a corner in your hearts and we know that you will not misjudge us if we did not hasten to Madras before going to the other presidencies and to other towns. . . . But, Sir, if one-tenth of the language that has been used in this address is deserved by us, what language do you propose to use for those who

have lost their lives and therefore finished their work on behalf of your suffering countrymen in South Africa? What language do you propose to use for Nagappan and Narayansamy, lads of seventeen or eighteen years who braved in simple faith all the trials, all the sufferings and all the indignities for the sake of the honour of the Motherland. (*Cheers.*) What language do you propose to use with reference to Valliamma, that sweet girl of seventeen years who was discharged from Maritzburg prison, skin and bone, suffering from fever to which she succumbed after about a month's time. (*Cries of "Shame".*)

It was the Madrassis who of all the Indians were singled out by the great Divinity that rules over us for this great work. Do you know that in the great city of Johannesburg, the Madrassis look on a Madrassi as dishonoured if he has not passed through the jails once or twice during this terrible crisis that your countrymen in South Africa went through during these eight long years? You have said that I inspired these great men and women, but I cannot accept that proposition. It was they, the simple-minded folk who worked away in faith never expecting the slightest reward, who inspired me, who kept me to the proper level, and who inspired me by their great sacrifice, by their great faith, by their great trust in the great God, to do the work that I was able to do. (*Cheers.*) It is my misfortune that my wife and I have been obliged to work in the limelight and you have magnified out of all proportion (*cries of "No ? No ?"*) this little work we have been able to do. Believe me, my dear friends, that if you consider, whether in India or in South Africa, it is possible for us, poor mortals—the same individuals, the same stuff of which you are made—if you consider that it is possible for us to do anything whatsoever without

your assistance and without your doing the same thing that we would be prepared to do, you are lost and we are also lost and our services will be in vain, I do not for one moment believe that the inspiration was given by us. The inspiration was given by them to us and we were able to be interpreters between the powers who called themselves the Governors and those men for whom redress was so necessary. We were simply links between those two parties and nothing more. It was my duty, having received the education that was given to me by my parents to interpret what was going on in our midst to those simple folk and they rose to the occasion. They realised the might of religious force and it was they who inspired us, and let them who have finished their work and who have died for you and me, let them inspire you and us. We are still living and who knows whether the devil will not possess us to-morrow and we shall not forsake the post of duty before any new danger that may face us. But these three have gone for ever.

An old man of 75 from the United Provinces, Harbart Singh, has also joined the majority and died in jail in South Africa, and he deserved the crown that you would seek to impose upon us. These young men deserve all the adjectives that you have so affectionately but blindly lavished upon us. It was not only the Hindus who struggled but there were Mahomedans, Parsis and Christians, and almost every part of India was represented in the struggle. They realised the common danger and they realised also what their destiny was as Indians and it was they, and they alone, who matched the soul-forces against the physical forces. (*Loud applause.*)



## THE INDIAN SOUTH AFRICAN LEAGUE

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At the General Meeting of the Indian South African League, held at the premises of Messrs. G. A. Natesan & Co., Madras, on Friday, May 7, 1915, with Dewan Bahadur M. Audinarayana Iyah in the chair, Mr. G. A. Natesan, one of the Joint Secretaries, presented a statement of accounts of the League and wound up by urging that the balance of the League's Fund might be handed over to Mr. Gandhi who had undertaken to look after the interests of the South Africa returned Indians and their dependents. The resolution was unanimously passed. Mr. Gandhi in the course of his reply made a brief statement and said :

The passive resistance struggle started with the Asiatic struggle in the Transvaal in 1906. As it went on stage after stage, it owing to the exigencies of the case and as a matter of course expanded and embraced the following further points, viz., (1) the removal of racial disability in the immigration legislation of the Union of South Africa ; (2) the restoration of the status of Indian wives whether married in accordance with Hindu or Mahomedan religious rites as it originally existed before what was known in South Africa as the Searle Judgment ; (3) repeal of the annual £3 tax which was payable by every ex-indentured Indian, his wife and his children—male and female—males after reaching 16 years, females after reaching 12, if they decided to settle in the province of Natal as free men ; (4) just administration of existing laws specially affecting British Indians with due regard to vested rights. All these points were completely gained under the Settlement of last year and they have been embodied so far as legislation was necessary in what was known as the Indian Relief Act and otherwise in the correspondence that took place between General Smuts and himself immediately after the passing of the Act referred

to. Such being the case and as the Indian South African League was formed solely for the purpose of assisting the struggle it could well dissolve itself. Mr. Gandhi referred also to the administration of the funds that were sent to him from India and other parts of the Empire. He said that, at every stage of the struggle, a complete statement of income and expenditure was published.

Mr. Gandhi then informed the meeting that there were nearly 30 passive resisters including their families in India who were to be supported. These included the widows and children of the two men who were shot in the course of the struggle. He therefore suggested that the small balance which was still with the Indian South African League might well be devoted to their assistance. Mr. Gandhi desired to take the opportunity to express the thanks of the South African Indians for the great and valuable assistance it had rendered to them during the most critical times of the struggle. He was not going to mention any names but he felt it his duty to convey in person as the interpreter of the wishes of many Transvaal deportees who were in Madras in 1909 of their heartfelt thanks to Mr. Natesan for the devotion which he displayed in looking after their interest during their exile in India. He was glad he was able to convey in person his grateful thanks to the Chairman and the Members of the League for the moral and material support they had rendered to their cause.

## RECIPROCITY BETWEEN INDIA AND THE DOMINIONS

At the Madras Provincial Conference held at Nellore in June 1915, Mr. G. A. Natesan moved a resolution thanking Mr. and Mrs. Gandhi for the invaluable services they had rendered to the Motherland by their heroic struggle in South Africa. Mr. Gandhi, in acknowledging the thanks of the Conference, spoke as follows :

In so far as sentiment enters into the claims of India with regard to the status of Indians in the Empire, it seems possible that by a measure of reciprocal treatment as between India and the Dominions this difficulty could be surmounted. Given an outlet for Indian emigrants in East Africa, it ought not to be beyond the powers of statesmanship to arrange that India should have the power to exclude white men of the working class just as the Dominions exclude Indians. Or rather it might be arranged that the number of Indians to be admitted to any one of the white States of the Empire should bear a relative proportion to the white population of the State. As a matter of fact, if the proportion agreed on is to avoid the necessity for removing some of the Asiatics now in the Dominions, it will have to be something like twice as great as the number of the whites in India in relation to the total population. The existing white community in India, inclusive of troops, bears the proportion of about 1 : 2,002 of the native population. In Canada there are now about 3,000 Indians in a total population of 8,000,000. A 1 : ratio 1,000 as suggested would therefore permit the Indian colony in Canada to be increased by about 5,000. In Australia there are rather more than 5,000 Indians, and under

5,000,000 white men at present, but the excess over the 1: 1,000 ratio is trifling. In New Zealand where there are about 1: 250 Indians, this ratio is almost exactly conformed to by the existing situation. South Africa presents a difficulty since the South African Indians already exceed a proportion of 1 to 10 of the white residents. But South Africa differs from its sister Dominions since it is the only one which has a native population of more than negligible size. The Indian section of the composite racial problem presented by the Union might perhaps be adjusted somewhat by offering inducements to South African Indians to transfer themselves to East Africa. The conferring of full political rights on the small Indian communities domiciled in the Dominions would then be the only step necessary to meet every legitimate aspiration of Indians for equality of treatment and the recognition of their claims as British subjects.

## INDIAN AND EUROPEAN EMIGRANTS

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Mr. Gandhi, in moving the resolution on India and the Colonies at the Bombay Congress of 1915, said :

Mr. President and Friends,—the Resolution that stands in my name reads thus :

The Congress regrets that the existing laws affecting Indians in South Africa and Canada have not, in spite of the liberal and imperialistic declarations of colonial statesmen, been justly and equitably administered, and this Congress trusts that the self-governing colonies will extend to the Indian emigrants equal rights with European emigrants and that the Imperial Government will use all possible means to secure the rights which have been hitherto unjustly withheld from them, thus causing widespread dissatisfaction and discontent.

Friends,—It is an irony of fate that whilst this vast assembly will be regretting the hostile attitude that has been adopted by the Self-Governing Colonies, a contingent of your countrymen formed in South Africa will be nearing the theatre of war in order to help the sick and the wounded, and I am in possession of facts in connection with this contingent formed in South Africa which shows that it is composed of the middle classes which, in accordance with the *Times of India*, are going to form the future self-governing nation. Those men are drawn from ex-indentured Indians and their children, from the petty hawkers, the toilers, the traders, and yet the colonies do not consider it necessary to alter their attitudes nor do I see the logic in altering their policy. It is the fashion now-a-days to consider that because our humble share in not being disloyal to the Government at the present juncture, we are entitled to the rights which have

been hitherto withheld from us as if those rights were withheld because our loyalty was suspected. No, my friends, if they have been withheld from us, the reasons are different and those reasons will have to be altered. They are due, some of them to nndying prejudices, to economic causes and these will have to be examined ; but prejudice will have to be cut down. And what are the hardships that our conntrymen are labouring under in South Africa, in Canada, and the other self-governing colonies? In South Africa the Settlement of 1914 secures what the passive resisters were fighting for and nothing more, and they were fighting for the restoration of legal equality in connection with emigrants from British India and nothing more.

That legal equality has been restored but the domestic troubles still remain and if it was not the custom unfortunately inherited for the last forty years that the predominant language in this assembly should be English, our Madras friends will have taken good care to have learnt one of the northern vernaculars and then there are men enough in South Africa who would tell you about the difficulties that we have to go through even now in South Africa in connection with holding landed property, in connection with men who having been once domiciled in South Africa return to South Africa, their difficulties in connection with the admission of children, their difficulties in connection with holding licenses of trade. These are, if I may so call them, bread and butter difficulties. There are other difficulties which I shall not enumerate just now. In Canada, it is not possible for these members of the Sikhs who are domiciled there to bring their wives and their children. (*Cries of "Shame, Shame".*) The law is the same but administration is widely unequal, so unequal

that they cannot bring their wives and children, and the law or the administration still remains the same in spite of declarations about justice and what not, in view of the hostilities and in view of the splendid aid which India is said to have rendered to the Empire. How are these difficulties to be met. I do not intend to go into details, but the Congress proposes that this difficulty can be met by an appeal to the sense of justice of the colonial statesmen and by an appeal to the Imperial Government. I fear that the Congress can only do this but the resolution so far as it goes in one respect is inadequate to the occasion. Lord Hardinge only a few months ago made a fervent appeal to Indian publicists and to Indian public statesmen for helping him to an honourable solution which will retain the dignity of India at the same time, not because of any trouble to the self governing colonies. Lord Hardinge is still waiting for an answer, that answer is not supplied by the Congress nor can it be by the Congress; it is to be supplied by an association of the specialists if I may so call them. The Congress has given them the lead, and it is for these associations to frame the details in which they will have to examine the rival claims and to offer to Lord Hardinge a solution which shall be saturated with details, a solution which will satisfy the Colonial Governments as well as the Indian people and will not take away anything whatsoever from the just demands that this resolution makes. With these words I have much pleasure in proposing this resolution.

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## INDENTURED LABOUR

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The following is a pronouncement made by Mr. Gandhi during the strenuous agitation made throughout India in the early part of 1917 for the complete abolition of indenture :

There is no doubt that we are engaged in a severe struggle for the preservation of our honour and that, if we do not take care, the promise made by Lord Hardinge that indentured labour should soon be a thing of the past may be reduced to a nullity. The Viceregal pronouncement just made seems to set at rest one fear that the system may be prolonged for a further period of five years which, as Sir Ramakrishna Bhandarkar showed at Poona, would in reality mean ten years. We are thankful to Lord Chelmsford for his assurance. And we are thankful, too, to that good Englishman, Mr. C. F. Andrews, for the lead that he gave us in the matter. So soon as he gained the information from Fiji that five years' extension was taken by the planters of those lands as a settled fact, he forsook his sick-bed and his rest at Shanti Niketan and sounded for us the call of duty.

But if one cloud that threatened to destroy our hopes seems to have disappeared, another equally dangerous looms on the horizon. The conditions of abolition, as intimated by Lord Hardinge last March, are these :

On behalf of His Majesty's Government, the Secretary of State has asked us, however, to make it clear that the existing system of recruiting must be maintained until new conditions under which labour should not be permitted to proceed to the colonies should have been worked out in conjunction with the Colonial Office and the Crown Colonies concerned; until proper safeguards in the colonies should have been provided and until they should have had reasonable time to adjust themselves to the change, a period which must necessarily depend on circumstances and conditions imperfectly known at present.



Those of us who know anything of the system knew that it was well-nigh impossible to find new conditions which would be economically sound for the planters and morally sound for us. We felt that the Government would soon find this out for themselves and that, in view of Lord Hardinge's whole-hearted disapproval of the system, his view of the nearness of the end would coincide with her own. But now a different situation faces us. Nearly a year has gone by and we discover that the planters of Fiji have been led to believe that they will have five years more of the system and at the end of it new conditions may after all be a change in name but not in substance. Let Mr. Bonar Law's despatch speak for itself. Writing under date March 4, 1916, to the Acting Governor of Fiji, he says :

The Secretary of State for India is satisfied that it would not be possible for the Government of India to continue to defeat by a bare official majority resolutions in their Legislative Council, urging the abolition of indenture; that in his opinion the strong and universal feeling in India on this subject makes it a question of urgency and that he has accepted the conclusion that indentured emigration must be abolished.

He then proceeds :

Though, from the point of view of the Colonies concerned, the decision which the Indian Government and the Secretary of State for India have taken is to be regretted, I recognise that the final decision upon this question must rest with the Indian Government.

Thus the humanities of the question are tacitly supposed to be no concern of the colonies.

Now mark this significant paragraph culled from the same illuminating despatch :

I have, therefore, agreed to the appointment of an inter-departmental committee to consider what system should be substituted for the system of indenture should be allowed for a further period of five years and should cease at the end of that period. . . . The Secretary of State for India is anxious that the change of system should be brought about with as little disturbance as

possible to the economic interests of the colonies and that he has made it clear that the existing system must be maintained until a properly safeguarded system has been devised.

Mr. Andrews has been twitted for having referred to the five years' extension. Let his critics explain away Mr. Bonar Law's emphatic pronouncement published in the Fiji newspapers. What with the official statement and the Secretary of State for India's solicitude for the economic interests of the planters, our cause may easily be lost if we are found unwatchful.

In the light of the Viceregal speech and Mr. Bonar Law's despatch, our duty seems to be clear. We must strengthen the Government's hands where necessary and even stimulate their activity so that this inter-departmental committee is not allowed to frustrate our hopes. It is a body wherein the influence of the Crown Colonies and the Colonial Office will be preponderant. It is a body which has to find a substitute which would be acceptable to us. As I hold, it will be a vain search if the mere well-being of the labourer is to be the primary consideration. But if the planters can have their own way, we know that they will urge an impossible substitute and, in the event of its rejection by us, they will, in accordance with Mr. Bonar Law's despatch, claim continuance of recruiting under indenture. It must therefore be clearly understood that the onus of producing an acceptable substitute rests with them and not with us. They have had more than a year already. Lord Hardinge's despatch urging total abolition is dated the 15th October 1915. The committee is to sit in May next. This period for finding a substitute is long enough in all conscience. Either Mr. Andrews' harrowing picture of the conditions of life in Fiji is true or it is untrue. We believe it to be true and

it has never been seriously attacked. And in waiting for over a year, we shall have waited almost beyond the point of endurance. Substitute or no substitute, we are entitled for the sake of our own honour and reputation and indeed that of the Empire to the unconditional abolition of this last remnant of slavery. Natal stopped the system without the provision of a substitute. Mauritius has done likewise. The Johannesburg mines survived not only the shock of an abrupt termination of Chinese labour but the withdrawal of every Chinese labourer from the country as fast as transport could be got ready. •

Capital is both bold and timid. If only we shall do our duty, if only the Government of India will steel their hearts against the blandishments of the Fijian and West Indian planters, there is no doubt that these people will know how to save millions without India's having to go to their rescue.

## INDIAN COLONIAL EMIGRATION

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The following article was published in the *Indian Review* for September 1917:

I have carefully read the resolution issued at Simla by the Government of India on the 1st instant, embodying the report of the Inter-Departmental Conference recently held in London. It will be remembered that this was the conference referred to in the Viceregal speech of last year at the opening of the sessions of the Viceregal Legislative Council. It will be remembered, too, that this was the conference which Sir James Meeson and Sir S. P. Sinha were to have attended but were unable to attend owing to their having returned to India before the date of the meeting of the conference. It is stated in the report under discussion that these gentlemen were to discuss the question of emigration to certain English colonies informally with the two Secretaries of State, *i.e.*, the Secretary of State for India and the Secretary of State for the Colonies. Lord Islington, Sir A. Steel Maitland and Messrs. Seton, Grindle, Green and Macnaughton constituted the Conference. To take the wording of the Resolution, this Conference sat "to consider the proposals for a new assisted system of emigration to British Guiana, Trinidad, Jamaica and Fiji". The public should therefore note that this assisted emigration is to be confined only to the four Crown Colonies mentioned and not to the Self-Governing Colonies of South Africa, Canada or Australia, or the Crown Colony of Mauritius. What follows will show the importance of this distinction. It is something to be thankful for, that "the Government of

India have not yet considered the report and reserved judgment on all the points raised in it". This is as it should be on a matter so serious as this and one which only last year fairly convulsed the whole of India and which has in one shape or another agitated the country since 1895.

The declaration too that "His Majesty's Government in agreement with the Government of India have decided that indentured emigration shall not be re-opened" is welcome as is also the one that "no free emigrants can be introduced into any colony until all Indian emigrants already there have been released from existing indentures".

In spite however of so much in the report that fills one with gladness, the substantive part of it which sets forth the scheme which is to replace indentured emigration is so far as one can judge, to say the least of it, disappointing. Stripped of all the phraseology under which the scheme has been veiled, it is nothing less than a system of indentured emigration, no doubt on a more humane basis and safeguarded with some conditions beneficial to the emigrants taking advantage of it.

The main point that should be borne in mind is that Conference sat designedly to consider a scheme of emigration not in the interests of the Indian labourer but in those of the Colonial employer. The new system therefore is devised to help the colonies concerned. India needs no outlet at any rate for the present moment for emigration outside the country. It is debatable whether in any event the four colonies will be the most suitable for Indian colonisation. The best thing therefore that can happen from an Indian stand-point is that there should be no assisted emigration from India of any type whatsoever. In the absence of any such assistance, emigration will have to be entirely free and at

the risk and expense of the emigrant himself. Past experience shows that, in that event, there will be very little voluntary emigration to distant colonies. In the report, assisted emigration means, to use a mild expression, stimulated emigration; and surely with the industries of India crying out for labour and with her legitimate resources yet undeveloped, it is madness to think of providing a stimulus for the stay-at-home Indian to go out of India. Neither the Government nor any voluntary agency has been found capable of protecting from ill-usage the Indian who emigrates either to Burma or Ceylon much less can any such protection avail in far-off Fiji or the three other colonies. I hope that leaders of public opinion in India will therefore take their stand on the one impregnable rock of not wanting any emigration whatsoever to the colonies. It might be argued that we, as a component part of the Empire, are bound to consider the wants of our partners, but this would not be a fair plea to advance so long as India stands in need of all the labour she can produce. If therefore India does not assist the colonies it is not because of want of will but it is due to want of ability. An additional reason a politician would be justified in using is that, so long as India does not in reality occupy the position of an equal partner with the colonies and so long as her sons continue to be regarded by Englishmen in the colonies and English employers even nearer home to be fit only as hewers of wood and drawers of water, no scheme of emigration to the colonies can be morally advantageous to Indian emigrants. If the badge of inferiority is always to be worn by them, they can never rise to their full status and any material advantage they will gain by emigrating can therefore be of no consideration.

But let us for the moment consider the new system. "The system," it is stated, "to be followed in future will be one of aided emigration and its object will be to encourage the settlement of Indians in certain colonies after a probationary period of employment in those colonies to train and fit them for life and work there and at the same time to acquire a supply of the labour essential to the well-being of the colonists themselves." So the re-settlement is to be conditional on previous employment under contract and it will be seen in the course of our examination that this contract is to be just as binding as the contracts used to be under indenture. The report has the following humorous passage in it: "He will be in no way restricted to service under any particular employer except that for his own protection a selected employer will be chosen for him for the first six months." This has a flavour of the old indentured system. One of the evils complained of about that system was that the labourer was assigned to an employer. He was not free to choose one himself. Under the new system, the employer is to be selected for the protection of the labourer. It is hardly necessary for me to point out that the would-be labourer will never be able to feel the protection devised for him. The labourer is further "to be encouraged to work for his first three years in agricultural industries by the offer, should he do so, of numerous and important benefits subsequently as a colonist". This is another inducement to indenture and I know enough of such schemes to be able to assure both the Government and Public that these so-called inducements in the hands of clever manipulators become nothing short of methods of compulsion in respect of innocent and ignorant Indian labourers. It is due to the framers of the scheme that

I should draw attention to the fact that they have avoided all criminal penalties for breach of contract. In India itself if the scheme is adopted, we are promised a revival of the much-dreaded depots and emigration agents, all no doubt on a more respectable basis but still of the same type and capable of untold mischief.

The rest of the report is not likely to interest the public, but those who wish to study it will, I doubt not, come to the conclusion to which I have been driven, that the framers have done their best to strip the old system of many of the abuses which had crept into it, but they have not succeeded in placing before the Indian public an acceptable scheme. I hold that it was an impossible task. The system of indenture was one of temporary slavery; it was incapable of being amended, it should only be ended and it is to be hoped that India will never consent to its revival in any shape or form.



## ADVICE TO SOUTH AFRICAN INDIANS

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In spite of his multifarious activities in India, Mr. Gandhi seldom forgot the scene of his early labours. His South African friends and fellow-workers are always dear to him. In a communication to the *Indian Opinion*, he wrote under date 15th December, 1917:

When I left South Africa I had fully intended to write to my Indian and English friends there from time to time, but I found my lot in India to be quite different from what I had expected it to be. I had hoped to be able to have comparative peace and leisure but I have been irresistibly drawn into many activities. I hardly cope with them and local daily correspondence. Half of my time is passed in the Indian trains. My South African friends will, I hope, forgive me for my apparent neglect of them. Let me assure them that not a day has passed but I have thought of them and their kindness. South African associations can never be effaced from my memory.

You will not now be surprised when I tell you that it was only to-day that I learnt from *Indian Opinion* to hand about the disastrous floods. During my travels I rarely read newspapers and I have time merely to glance at them whilst I am not travelling. I write this to tender my sympathy to the sufferers. My imagination enables me to draw a true picture of their sufferings. They make one thing of God and His might and the utter evanescence of this life. They ought to teach us ever to seek His protection and never to fail in the daily duty before us. In the Divine account-books only our actions are noted, not what we have read or what we have spoken. These and similar reflections fill my soul for the moment and I wish to share them with the sufferers. The deep poverty that

I experience in this country deters me even from thinking of financial assistance to be sent for those who have been rendered homeless. Even one pie in this country counts. I am at this very moment living in the midst of thousands who have nothing but roasted pulse or grain flour mixed with water and salt. We here therefore can only send the sufferers an assurance of our heartfelt grief.

I hope that a determined movement will be set on foot to render illegal residence on flats exposed to visitations of death-dealing floods. The poor will, if they can, inhabit even such sites regardless of consequences. It is for the enlightened persons to make it impossible for them to do so. . . . .

I note, too, that our people in South Africa are not yet free from difficulties about trade licences and leaving certificates. My Indian experience has confirmed the opinion that there is no remedy like passive resistance against such evils. The community has to exhaust milder remedies but I hope that it will not allow the sword of passive resistance to get rusty. It is our duty whilst the terrible War lasts to be satisfied with petitions, etc., for the desired relief, but I think the Government should know that the community will not rest until the questions above mentioned are satisfactorily solved. It is but right that I should also warn the Community against dangers from within. I hear from those who return from South Africa that we are by no means free of those who are engaged in illicit traffic. We who seek justice must be above suspicion, and I hope that our leaders will not rest till they have purged the community of internal defects.

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## RAILWAY RESTRICTIONS IN TRANSVAAL

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Writing to the *Times of India* on June 2, 1918, Mr. Gandhi drew attention to the fresh disabilities imposed on Indians by the Union Government by the introduction of the railway travelling restrictions. Mr. Gandhi, while deploring the existing colour prejudices, felt bound to protest against the attempt of the Union Government to give legal recognition to the anti-colour campaign. We omit the long extracts from the *Indian Opinion* and give the text of Mr. Gandhi's letter:

SIR,—I offer no apology for seeking the hospitality of your columns for the enclosed extracts from *Indian Opinion*. They deal with the well-being of over two lakhs of emigrants from India. Mr. Ahmed Mahomed Cachalia, the esteemed President of the British Indian Association of Johannesburg, has sent from that place the following cablegram regarding one of the matters referred to in the extracts :

"Mass meeting fifth strongly protested section nineteen, railway regulations. Resolved cable supporters India. Regulations impose statutory color-bar in regard to issue of tickets, placing in and removing from compartments, occupation of places on station platforms, empowers minor officials remove without assigning reason. Please make suitable representations appropriate quarters. Community unanimous assert rights unless relief sought granted."

Mr. Cachalia was one of the staunchest workers during the passive resistance campaign that raged for eight years in South Africa. During that campaign he reduced himself to poverty and accepted imprisonment for the sake of India's honour. One can, therefore, easily understand what is meant by the words 'community unanimous assert right unless relief sought granted'.

It is not a threat. It is the burning cry of distress felt by a community whose self-respect has been injured.

It is evident that the white people of South Africa have not been visibly impressed by the War which is claimed to be waged for the protection of the rights of weaker or minor nationalities. Their prejudice against colour is not restrained even by the fact that local Indians have raised a volunteer bearer corps which is gallantly serving in East Africa with the column that was taken to East Africa by General Smuts.

The problem is difficult, it is complex. Prejudices cannot be removed by legislation. They will yield only to patient toil and education. But what of the Union Government? It is now feeding the prejudice by legalising it. Indians would have been content if the popular prejudice had been left to work itself out, care being taken to guard against violence on either side. Indians of South Africa could not complain even against a boycott on the part of the whites. It is there already. In social life they are completely ostracised. They feel the ostracism but they silently bear it. But the situation alters when the Government steps in and gives legal recognition to the anti-colour campaign. It is impossible for the Indian settlers to submit to an insulting restraint upon their movements. They will not allow booking clerks to decide as to whether they are becomingly dressed. They cannot allow a platform-inspector to restrict them to a reserved part of a platform. They will not, as if they were ticket-of-leave men, produce their certificates in order to secure railway tickets.

The pendency of the War cannot be used as an effective shield to cover fresh wrongs and insults. The plucky custodians of India's honour are doing their share in South Africa. We here are bound to help them.

Meetings throughout India should inform the white inhabitants of South Africa that India resents their treatment of her sons. They should call upon the Government of India and the Imperial Government to secure effective protection for our countrymen in South Africa. I hope that Englishmen in India will not be behindhand in lending their valuable support to the movement to redress the wrong. Mr. Cachalia's cable is silent on the grievance disclosed in the second batch of extracts. It is not less serious. In its effect it is far more deadly. But the Community is hoping to right the wrong by an appeal to the highest legal tribunal in the Union. But really the question is above that tribunal. Let me state it in a sentence. A reactionary Attorney-General has obtained a ruling from the Natal Supreme Court to the effect that subjects of 'Native States' are aliens and not British subjects and are therefore not entitled to its protection so far as appeals under a particular section of the Immigrants Restriction Act are concerned. Thus if the 'local Court's ruling is correct, thousands of Indians settled in South Africa will be deprived of the security of residence in South Africa for which they fought for eight years and which they thought they had won. At least a quarter of the Indian settlers of South Africa are subjects of the Baroda and the Kathiawar States. If any law considers them as aliens, surely it has to be altered. It is an insult to the States and their subjects to treat the latter as aliens.

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## DISABILITIES OF TRANSVAAL INDIANS

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In 1919, the Transvaal Legislature passed laws restricting the then Indian traders and their successors to particular townships. The disabilities of Indian traders multiplied and became the subject of an acute agitation and threatened to revive passive resistance. On receipt of a cable early in August 1919 from the British Indian Association, Natal, Mr. Gandhi wrote as follows in the *Indian Review* :

I have just received the following cablegram from Mr. Ibrahim Ismail Aswat, Chairman of the British Indian Association, Johannesburg :

"Bill assented 23rd June, promulgated 3rd instant. Restricts companies acquiring further fixed properties and holding bonds as prior to company law. Re-affirms Gold and Townships Acts operating on new licencees after 1st May and restricting present traders and successors to particular townships. Deputation waiting His Excellency urging withhold assent on ground class legislation. Government promised another Commission during recess investigate Indian question throughout Union as concession to the detractors in Parliament. Fear further restrictive legislation. Community request you appeal Viceroy propose Royal Commission. India representing Union local Indian interests. Convened Union Indian Conference 4th August, great success. Decided united action. Many of the associations pledged resist any cost—Aswat."

The cablegram bears out what I have said in my letter to Sir George Barnes\* and what I said at the recent meeting

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\* In the course of the correspondence between Mr. Gandhi and Sir George Barnes, Mr. Gandhi wrote :

"Do you know that the Indians of South Africa raised an ambulance corps which served under General Smuts in South Africa? Is this new law to be their reward? I ought not to bring in War services in order to secure the protection of an elementary right which considerations alike of honour and justice entitle them to. I commend to your attention the report of the Select Committee of the Union House of Assembly.

The Union Government, unmindful of their trust and equally unmindful of their written word, accepted the amendment

at Poona. The restrictions are clear: 1. No further holding of landed property in the Transvaal. 2. No new trade licences within the area affected by the Gold Law and the Townships Act. 3. The present holders and their successors in title to be restricted as to trade to the townships in which they are now trading.

As I have already remarked, this means virtual ruin of the Indian settlers in the Transvaal. Their only means of livelihood to the largest number is trade, and the largest number of Indians is to be found probably within the gold area. If the Act stands, they must die out in the natural course:

In the cablegram the word 'assent' occurs twice. It says the Bill has been assented to and it refers to a deputation that is to wait on H. E. the Governor-General of South Africa requesting him to withhold assent. The second use of the word 'assent' refers probably to a clause in the Letters Patent providing for the vetoing of class legislation. The clause is undoubtedly to be used under exceptional circumstances. No one can deny that the Asiatics Act constitutes a very exceptional circumstance warranting the exercise of the Royal veto.

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"prohibiting the holding of mortgages by the Asiatics on property except as security for *bona fide* loan or investment and providing that any Asiatic Company which acquired fixed property after the 1st instant should dispose of the same within two years or a further period as fixed by a competent Court with a rider that in the event of failure to do so the property might be sold by an order of the Court". I am quoting from Reuter's cable dated 23rd May from Capetown. You will see this completes legalised confiscation of property rights throughout the Transvaal and virtually the trade rights within the gold area of the Indian settlers. There was no evasion of Law 3 of 1885. Indians did openly what the law permitted them to do and they should be left free to do so. I do not wish to prolong this tale of agony. The Government of India are bound to protect the rights of the 5,000 Indian settlers in the Transvaal at any cost."

The most important part of the cablegram, however, is the fact that the Commission promised by the Union Government is to be appointed as a "concession" to "the detractors" of Indians in the Union Parliament. Unless therefore the Government of India take care, there is every likelihood of the Commission, like the Committee of the South African Assembly, proving to the British Indians a curse instead of a blessing. It is therefore not unnatural that the British Indian Association urges that H. E. the Viceroy should propose a Royal Commission upon which both the Union and the Indian interests are represented. Nothing can be fairer than the proposal made by Mr. Aswat. I say so, because as a matter of right no Commission is really needed to decide that Indian settlers are entitled to trade in South Africa where they like and hold landed property on the same terms as the European settlers. This is the minimum they can claim. But under the complex constitution of this great Empire, justice is and has often to be done in a round-about manner. A wise captain, instead of sailing against a head-wind, tacks and yet reaches his destination sooner than he otherwise would have. Even so, Mr. Aswat wisely accepts the principle of a Commission on a matter that is self-evident but equally wisely wants a Commission that would not prove abortive and that will dare to tell the ruling race in South Africa that as members in an Empire which has more coloured people than white, they may not treat their Indian fellow-subjects as helots. Whether the above proposal is accepted or some other is adopted by the Imperial Government, it must be made clear to them that public opinion in India will not tolerate confiscation of the primary rights of the British Indian settlers in South Africa.



## INDIAN RIGHTS IN THE TRANSVAAL

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From time to time trouble rose in Transvaal between the trading people among European Colonists and Indians. A policy of squeezing out the Indian petty trader was prevalent throughout the Colony. A correspondent of the *Times of India* wrote to its columns on August 18, 1919, that South Africa cannot be run economically with the Indian in it and the white people cannot be expected to commit race suicide. Strangely enough even the Smuts-Gandhi agreement was pressed into the issue. Mr. Gandhi wrote to the *Times of India* :

No possible exception can be taken to the impartial manner in which your South African correspondent has given a summary of the Indian position in the Transvaal in your issue of the 18th instant. He has put as fairly as it was possible for him to do both sides of the question.

It is not the additional 'brown burden on the top of the black one' which agitate 'the European Colonists in South Africa', but "the crux of the whole question is", as your correspondent puts it, "that South Africa cannot be run economically with the Indian in it, and the white people who have made the country, cannot be expected to commit race suicide." This is not the problem that presents itself to the Boer living on the Veldt to whom the Indian trader is a blessing nor to the European housewife in the big towns of the Transvaal who depends solely upon the Indian vegetable vendor for the vegetables brought to her door. But the problem presents itself in the manner put by your correspondent to the petty European trader who finds in the thrifty and resourceful Indian a formidable rival, and with his vote which counts a great deal and with his influence as a member of the ruling race he has succeeded in making his

own economic problem a race problem for South Africa. In reality the problem is whether the petty trader for his selfish end is to be allowed to override every consideration of justice, fair play, Imperial policy and all that goes to make a nation good and great.

In support of the gradual but certain squeezing out process, what has been called the Smuts-Gandhi agreement has been pressed into service. Now that agreement is embodied in two letters and two only of the 30th June 1914: the first one addressed to me on behalf of General Smuts by Mr. Gorges, Secretary for the Interior, and the second my acknowledgment of it bearing the same date. The agreement, as the letters conclusively show, is an agreement on questions which were the subject of civil—in the correspondence described as passive—resistance. The settlement stipulates only for an extension—never a restriction—of existing rights, and as it was intended only to cover questions arising out of civil resistance it left open all the other questions. Hence the reservation in my letter of the 30th June, *viz.*,

• As the Minister is aware, some of my countrymen have wished me to go further. They are dissatisfied that trade licences, laws of the different Provinces, the Transvaal Gold Law, the Transvaal Law 3 of 1885, have not been altered so as to give them full rights of residence, trade and ownership of land. Some of them are dissatisfied that full inter-provincial migration is not permitted and some are dissatisfied that on the marriage question the Relief Bill goes no further than it does.

In this correspondence there is not a word about the Indian settlers not getting trade licences or holding fixed property in the mining or any other area. And the Indians had a perfect right to apply for and get as many trade licences as they could secure and as much fixed property as they could hold, whether through forming registered companies or through mortgages. After a

strenuous fight for eight years it was not likely that I would give away any legal rights, and if I did, the community, I had the honour to represent, would naturally and quite properly have dismissed me as an unworthy, if not a traitorous, representative.

But there is a third letter, totally irrelevant, considered as part of the agreement which has been used for the curtailment of trade rights. It is my letter of the 7th July addressed to Mr. Gorges. The whole tone of it shows that it is purely a personal letter setting forth only my individual views about 'vested' rights in connection with the Gold Law and Townships Amendment Act'. I have therein stated definitely that I do not wish to restrict the future action of my countrymen and I have simply recorded the definition of 'vested rights'. I discussed with Sir Benjamin Robertson on the 4th March 1914, saying that by "vested rights I understand the right of an Indian and his successors to live and trade in townships in which he was living and trading, no matter how often he shifts his residence or business from place to place in the same township". This is the definition on which the whole of the theory of evasion of law and breach of faith has been based. Apart from the question of irrelevance of the letter I claim that it could not be used even if it could be admitted as part of the agreement in the manner it has been. As I have already stated on previous occasions there was a prospect of an adverse interpretation of the Gold Law as to trade licences and there was the tangible difficulty in getting land or leases of buildings and it was by the most strenuous efforts that Indians were able within gold areas to retain their foothold. I was anxious to protect the existing traders and their successors even though the legal interpretation of the law might be adverse

to the Indian claim. The vested right, therefore, referred to in my letter of the 7th July was a right created in spite of the law. And it was this right that had to be protected in the administration of the then existing laws. Even if, therefore, my said letter can be incorporated in the agreement, by no canon of interpretation that I know can it be said to prevent the Indians morally (for that is the meaning of the charge of breach of faith) from getting new trade licences in virtue of the law of the land. Indians openly and in a fair fight gained in their favour a legal decision to the effect that they could obtain trade licences against tender of the licence fee even within the gold area. To this they were perfectly morally entitled. There cannot be any question of a legal breach. There trade rivals would long ago have made short work of any legal breach. Lastly supposing that the law was adverse to the Indian claim, my definition could not be pleaded to bar any agitation for amendment of the law for the whole of the settlement if the nature of it was of a temporary character, and the Indians, as definitely stated in my letter of the 30th June, could not be expected to rest content until full civic rights had been conceded. The whole of the plea, therefore, of breach of faith is, I venture to submit, an utterly dishonest and shameless piece of tactics which ought not to be allowed to interfere with a proper adjustment of the question.

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## IMPERIAL CONFERENCE RESOLUTIONS

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In the course of an article criticising the Imperial Conference Resolution on Indian emigration, Mr. Gandhi wrote as follows in the *Indian Review* for August 1918 :

The Imperial Conference Resolution\* on the status of our countrymen emigrating to the Colonies, reads well

*\* The following is a summary of the proceedings of the Conference cabled by the Secretary of State to the Viceroy :*

The fifteenth meeting of the Conference was held on July 25th. The first subject discussed was reciprocity of treatment between India and the Dominions. This discussion followed on the resolution passed by the Conference last year, accepting the principle of reciprocity and a further resolution passed to that effect should now be given to the last year's resolution in pursuance of which the Conference agreed as follows: (1) It is the inherent function of the Governments of several Communities of British Commonwealth including India that each should enjoy complete control in the composition of its own population by means of restriction on immigration from any other communities. (2) British citizens domiciled in any British country including India should be admitted into any other British country for visits for the purposes of pleasure or commerce including temporary residence for the purpose of education. The conditions of such visits should be regulated on the principle of reciprocity as follows: (a) The right of the Government of India recognised to enact laws which shall have the effect of subjecting British citizens domiciled in any other British country to the same conditions in visiting India as those imposed on Indians desiring to visit such country. (b) Such right of visit or temporary residence shall, in each individual case, be embodied in the passport or written permit issued by the country of domicile and subject to visa there by an officer appointed by and acting on behalf of the country to be visited. If such a country so desires such right shall not extend to the visit or temporary residents for labour purpose or to permanent settlement. (3) Indians already permanently domiciled in other British countries should be allowed to bring in their wives and minor children on condition (a) that no more than one wife and her children shall be admitted for each such Indian, and (b) that each individual so admitted shall be certified by the Government of India as being the lawful wife or child of such Indian. The Conference recommends other questions covered by the Memoranda presented to the Conference by the representatives of India.

on the surface but it is highly deceptive. We need not consider it a great achievement that we can pass the same laws against the colonials that they may pass against us. It is like a giant telling a dwarf that the latter is free to give blow for blow. Who is to refuse permission and passports to the colonials desiring to enter India? But Indians, no matter what their attainments are, are constantly being refused permission to enter the colonies even for temporary periods. • South African legislation of emigration was purged of the racial taint by the passive resistance movement. But the administrative principles still continue and will do so, so long as India remains both in name and substance a dependency.

The agreement arrived at regarding those who are already domiciled practically re-states the terms of the Settlement of 1914. If it extends to Canada and Australia it is a decided gain, for in Canada till recently there was a big agitation owing to the refusal of its Government to admit the wives and children of its Sikh settlers. I may perhaps add that the South African Settlement provides for the protection of those who had plural wives before the settlement, especially if the latter had at any time entered South Africa. It may be the proper thing in a predominantly Christian country to confine the legality to only one wife. • But it is necessary even for that country, in the interests of humanity and for the sake of friendship for members of the same Imperial Federation to which they belong administratively, to allow the admission of plural wives and their progeny.

The above agreement still evades the question of inequality of status in other matters. Thus the difficulty of obtaining licences throughout South Africa, the prohibition to hold landed property in the Transvaal and the

Free State, and virtual prohibition within the Union itself of the entry of Indians into the Free State, the prohibition of Indian children to enter the ordinary Government schools, deprivation of municipal franchise in the Transvaal and the Free State, and practical deprivation of the Union franchise throughout South Africa, barring perhaps the Cape. The resolutions of the Imperial Conference therefore are decidedly an eye-wash. There is no change of heart in the colonies and certainly no recognition of Imperial obligations regarding India. The Fijian atrocities to which Mr. Andrews has drawn pointed attention, show what is possible even in the Crown Colonies which are under direct Imperial control.

## ANOTHER SOUTH AFRICAN COMMISSION

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In response to the agitation in South Africa and in India, a Commission was appointed by the Union Government to investigate the trade and other questions which caused grave irritation to the Indians; and Mr. Montagu, the Secretary of State for India, announced in November 1919 the inclusion of Sir Benjamin Robertson, Chief Commissioner of the Central Provinces in the Commission to represent the Government of India. Interviewed by the *Associated Press of India*, Mr. Gandhi said on the subject of enquiry and the composition:

I do feel that any agitation insisting upon the appointment on the Commission of Indian representatives may damage our case which is so overwhelmingly strong. If a representative like Mr. Sastri is appointed along with Sir Benjamin Robertson to put before the South African Government and the forthcoming Commission the Indian case, it would be the next best thing. In my opinion effort should be to concentrate upon securing a proper reference to the Commission in the place of the very narrow one, we are led to believe, is likely to be suggested by the Union Government. It is not enough that merely the trade question is referred to the Commission. The whole of the Law 3 of 1885 must come under review leaving aside for the time being the question of political status. Our goal must be the restoration of full trading and property rights of Indians lawfully settled in South Africa. This is what even Australia has allowed although it was Australia which led the anti-Asiatic cry. We must also guard against the Commission whittling down any of the rights already being enjoyed by the settlers. By no canon of justice or propriety can the existing rights be taken away from the Indian settlers, but if we do not take care and provide beforehand there is every danger of such a catastrophe happening.



## THE CLASS AREAS BILL

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Mr. Gandhi issued the following statement regarding the anti-Asiatic movement in South Africa, particularly the Class Areas Bill. The statement was issued from the Sassoon Hospital, Poona, on February 14, 1924:

As one expected to understand the situation created in South Africa by the anti-Asiatic movement now going on there and especially the Class Areas Bill now under consideration by the Union Parliament, I deem it my duty to place my opinion on the situation before the public.

The anti-Asiatic agitation on the part of Europeans in South Africa is no new thing. It is almost as old as the first settlement of unindentured Indians in South Africa and is principally due to trade jealousy on the part of the white retail traders. As in other parts of the world, so in South Africa interested men, if they sufficiently persist, find no difficulty in gathering the support round them of those who are not so interested but who do not think for themselves. The present agitation, I remember, was begun as early as 1921 and the Class Areas Bill is no doubt one of the results of the agitation.

Before dealing with the nature and effect of the Bill, it is necessary to point out that it is in breach of the compromise of 1914 arrived at between the Union Government and the Indian Community of South Africa. But it was a compromise to which both the Indian Government and the Imperial Government were as much a party as the Union Government and the Indian Community, because the compromise was arrived at with the knowledge and concurrence of the Imperial and the Indian Governments.

The latter had even sent Sir Benjamin Robertson as a representative technically to watch the course of the Commission that was appointed by the Union Government to inquire into the Indian position but in reality to negotiate a settlement. The main terms of the compromise were settled before Sir Benjamin Robertson who represented the Indian Government and had returned to India. In accordance with that compromise no further anti-Asiatic legislation was to be passed by the Union Government.

#### GOVERNMENT'S RESPONSIBILITY

The understanding at the time was that the legal position of Indians would be gradually improved and that the then existing anti-Asiatic legislation would in time to come be repealed. The contrary has, however, happened. The public may remember that the first attempt to break the spirit of the compromise was made when in Transvaal an attempt was made to enforce the existing legislation adversely towards the Indians and contrary to the practice that prevailed at the time of the compromise. The Class Areas Bill, however, goes much further in restricting Indian liberty. Whatever may be the other implications of the compromise, this much cannot be disputed by any party, that the Settlement of 1914 pledged the Union Government not to put further restrictions upon Indian liberty and apart from the general powers of disallowance vested in His Majesty under the Letter of Instructions addressed to the Governor-General of South Africa, the Imperial Government, if they would be true to their trust, are bound at any cost to insist upon the observance of the terms of the compromise referred to by me. We in India may not ignore the difficulties of the Union Government which is dependent for its existence solely upon the will of the Europeans of South Africa expressed through their elected representatives,

to the exclusion of Indians and the natives of the soil. This unwarranted exclusion is the original flaw in the South African constitution as it is to be found in the constitutions of most of the self-governing colonies which have their native populations. As the Imperial Government permitted the flaw, it is in honour bound to prevent untoward results arising from it. South Africa and Kenya will presently show what moral worth there is in the Imperial system. Pressure of public opinion may, and probably will, bring about temporary relief in both the places but it will be only temporary. It can merely postpone the final act in the tragedy unless some unforeseen radical change either in England or in India takes place.

#### MEANING OF SEGREGATION

And now for the Bill itself. Unlike the Natal Municipal Franchise Bill which happily the Union Governor-General has in effect vetoed and which applied only to Natal, the Class Areas Bill is designed to apply to all the poor provinces. It enables the Government to segregate all the domiciled Indians and other Asiatics alike for residence and trade. It is, therefore, an extension in a modified manner of the location system devised as early as 1885 by the late Transvaal Government. Let me say in a few words what this segregation may mean. The Indian location in Pretoria, where in spite of the Law of 1885 not a single Indian has been as yet compelled to remove, is situated far away from the town itself and entirely outside the beat of the buyer whether English, Dutch or native. The only trade possible in such locations is trade among themselves. Segregation, therefore, carried out to the full means nothing less than compulsory repatriation without any compensation. It is true that the Bill appears to preserve to a certain extent

the existing rights. But that reservation is of little consequence to the Indian settlers. I do not wish to burden this note by citing illustrations from South African experience to show how such reservations have in practice proved almost useless.

Finally, let it be remembered that when Indian emigration to South Africa was unrestricted, the fear of the Europeans was expressed to be that South Africa might be swamped by India's millions. All the South African statesmen then used to say that South Africa could easily digest a small Indian population and could even give it a liberal treatment but that the European settlers could never rest content so long as the possibility of swamping remained. Now that the so-called fear of swamping has been removed practically since 1897, the cry is raised for segregation and if that is accomplished the next step will be compulsory repatriation if the segregated Indians do not voluntarily retire. The fact is that the more accommodating the European settlers of South Africa find the Imperial trustees to be, the more grasping they become in their anti-Asiatic demands.

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## FIRST CAPE TOWN CONFERENCE

### "HONOURABLE COMPROMISE"

Events in South Africa continued to give constant trouble to Indian settlers who were handicapped alike by the nature of the laws and by the way they were enforced in the different provinces. In order to study the situation on the spot, the Government of India sent in December 1925 a deputation consisting of Mr. (later Sir George) Paddison, Mr. Raza Ali, Dr. Sarvadhikary and Mr. Bajpai. The South African Government returned the compliment by sending a similar deputation to India which was received in this country with every mark of goodwill and regard. The ground having thus been prepared for a mutual understanding by closer study and personal contact between the representatives of the Governments and peoples of either countries, it was decided that a Round Table Conference at Durban should be held to discuss and settle the outstanding issues by negotiation and agreement. Accordingly the Government of India sent a particularly strong and well chosen delegation under the lead of the Hon. Sir Muhammad Habibullah, the then Member of the Viceroy's Executive Council. The Deputation, which included the Rt. Hon. Sastri, Sir Pheroze Sethna, Sir Darcy Lindsay, Sir George Paddison, Mr. Corbett and Mr. Bajpai, left for South Africa in October 1926. The Conference was opened by General Hertzog at Cape Town on the 19th December. For weeks together the delegates were engaged in hammering out their conclusions. The Conference was a genuine effort at an understanding of each other's difficulties. The Government of India and the Indian delegation in particular were in frequent touch with Mahatma Gandhi as one entitled to be consulted on a question affecting South African Indians. On the conclusion of the Conference and the publication of the terms of the Settlement, Mahatma Gandhi, in a leading article in *Young India* of February 24, 1927, hailed the Agreement as a "Honourable Compromise". He wrote:

Sir Mahomed Habibullah and his colleagues are to be congratulated upon having secured a settlement that is honourable to both parties. It is not the best that could be conceived but it is the best that was possible. I doubt if any other deputation could have done more. The Class Areas Bill which brought about the Conference and round which the battle raged, is dead and gone. The Right Hon. Srinivasa Sastri who, when the deputation sailed for South Africa, was of all members the most communicative and had warned us not to expect much, did not conceal at the end of the labours of the Conference his satisfaction

at the result. A perusal of the Settlement warrants the satisfaction.

But like all compromises this one is not without its danger points. The dropping of the Class Areas Bill is balanced by repatriation, re-emerging as re-emigration. If the name is more dignified, it is also more dangerous. Repatriation could only be to India. Re-emigration can be to any country. The following sentence in the Settlement clearly points to that interpretation : The Union Government therefore will organise a scheme of assisted emigration to India or other countries where Western standards are not required. This assisted emigration to other countries I hold to be dangerous, for there is no knowing what may happen to the poor ignorant men going to an unknown land where they would be utter strangers. Such countries as would take them would only be either Fiji or British Guiana. Neither has a good name in India. It is decidedly a disadvantage to have been party to assisted emigration to any other part of the world.

The good point about this assisted emigration is that whereas before the settlement the repatriates lost their domicile, the re-emigrants now retain it and lose it only if they absent themselves so long as to warrant the inference that there is no intention on their part to return to South Africa. How many assisted emigrants can hope to refund the assistance in money they might have received or how many can hope to return with their families is a different question. The non-forfeiture clause is clearly designed not so much to guarantee a substantial right as not to hurt national self-respect.

The annexure, containing a summary of 'conclusions reached by the Round Table Conference on the Indian question in South Africa', is a remarkable document

betraying in every paragraph a heroic attempt to reconcile conflicting interests and sentiments. The industrious reader will have no difficulty in discovering hopeful paragraphs. I shall therefore content myself with drawing attention to a paragraph that is fraught with grave danger. The Union Government is 'to take special steps under the Public Health Act for an investigation into the sanitary and housing conditions in and around Durban which will include the question of the limitation of sale of municipal lands subject to restrictive conditions'. I do not know what is aimed at in this paragraph, but my suspecting mind—and my suspicion is based upon previous bitter experience of interpretations, warranted and unwarranted, that a strong party places upon agreements with a weak party to the latter's disadvantage—conjures up all kinds of frightful consequences arising from this proposed committee and limitation. Already the Durban Corporation has been invested with powers which it has utilised for the suppression of its Indian citizens. So far as I know a committee can bring to light nothing that is not known to the Corporation or the Government. The appointment of an advisory committee of Indians may be simple padding. The health committee may bring in a hysterical report, as a previous committee to my knowledge has done, and limitations may be put upon the purchase of municipal lands by Indians which may cramp the Indian community residing in Durban. Nor do I like the paragraph which seems to imply that Provincial Governments are at liberty to take any action they might against the Indian settlers without reference to the Central Government.

But the compromise is acceptable in spite of the dangers referred to by me, not so much for what

has been actually achieved as for the almost sudden transformation of the atmosphere in South Africa from one of remorseless hostility towards Indians to that of a generous toleration and from complete social ostracism to that of admission of Indians to social functions. Mr. Andrews sends me a glowing account of the utmost cordiality with which the Indian Members of the Deputation were received alike by the Government and the people, how local Indians were able to gain entry to the most fashionable hotel in Cape Town without any let or hindrance and how the Europeans in South Africa were flocking to him to know all about the Indian deputation and the Indian question. If this atmosphere of goodwill and sociability is kept up and encouraged, the settlement can be used as a solid foundation for erecting a beautiful temple of freedom for the Indian settlers in South Africa. But the success of the settlement very largely depends upon the selection of the Consul or the Commissioner who will be selected to represent the Government of India. He must be a person of eminence, great ability and great strength of character and in my opinion, he must be an Indian. The very fact of his being an Indian will strike the imagination of the European population and raise the Indian settlers in European estimation. He will reach the heart of Indians in a way no Englishman, not even perhaps Mr. Andrews, can, and if a man can be selected who will command the equal esteem of the Union Government, we need not fear the future. Such a man in my humble opinion is Mr. Srinivasa Sastri. I cannot conclude this hasty survey of the settlement without placing on record my deepest conviction that the happy result is predominantly due to the ceaseless and prayerful labours of that godly self-effacing Englishman Charlie Andrews.



## FIRST CAPE TOWN AGREEMENT, 1927

To appreciate Mr. Gandhi's criticism of the Agreement, it would be well for the reader to bear in mind the following articles which were approved of by the respective Governments as a basis of agreement. The Conference assembled at Cape Town on the 17th December, 1926 and its session finished on January 12, 1927. As the result of a full and frank exchange of views, the following Articles were adopted:

"1. Both Governments re-affirm their recognition of the right of South Africa to use all just and legitimate means for the maintenance of western standards of life.

2. The Union Government recognises that Indians domiciled in the Union who are prepared to conform to western standards of life, should be enabled to do so.

3. For those Indians in the Union who may desire to avail themselves of it, the Union Government will organise a scheme of assisted emigration to India or other countries where western standards are not required. Union domicile will be lost after 3 years' continuous absence from the Union in agreement with the proposed revision of the law relating to domicile which will be of general application. Emigrants under the assisted emigration scheme who desire to return to the Union within the 3 years will only be allowed to do so on refund to the Union Government of the cost of the assistance received by them.

4. The Government of India recognise their obligation to look after such emigrants on their arrival in India.

5. The admission into the Union of the wives and minor children of Indians permanently domiciled in the Union will be regulated by paragraph 3 of Resolution XXI of the Imperial Conference of 1918.

6. In the expectation that the difficulties with which the Union has been confronted will be materially lessened by the agreement now happily reached between the two Governments and in order that the agreement may come into operation under the most favourable auspices and have a fair trial, the Government of the Union of South Africa have decided not to proceed further with the Areas Reservation and Immigration and Registration (Further Provision) Bill.

7. The two Governments have agreed to watch the working of the agreement now reached and to exchange views from time to time as to any changes that experience may suggest.

8. The Government of the Union of South Africa have requested the Government of India to appoint an agent in order to secure continuous and effective co-operation between the two Governments."

## SASTRI AS FIRST AMBASSADOR

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Mr. Gandhi himself suggested the name of the Rt. Hon. Sastri as the fittest Indian to hold the office of the first Indian Agent in South Africa. The announcement of the appointment was received both in India and South Africa with acclamation and Mr. Gandhi gave expression to his satisfaction in the following article in *Young India* of April 28, 1927:

Very considerable relief will be felt by the Indian settlers in South Africa over the announcement that the Right Hon. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri has consented to become India's first Agent-General in that sub-Continent if the post is finally offered to him by the Government of India. It is a great sacrifice that Sastri and Servants of India Society have made. It is an open secret that left to himself he was not inclined to undertake the responsibility and to leave his work in India. But he has yielded to the pressure of friends, especially when it was urged upon him that he alone could successfully inaugurate the working of the Agreement in bringing about which he played not an inconsiderable part. We know from the cables that were sent from time to time from South Africa that the Europeans were anxious that he should accept the honour. Sjt. Srinivasa Sastri had by his eloquence, transparent sincerity, sweet reasonableness, and extreme earnestness won the esteem and respect of the Union Government and the Europeans in South Africa during the short time that he was there as a member of the Habibullah Deputation. I know how nervously anxious our countrymen in South Africa were that he should become the first Agent. It was

impossible for Sjt. Srinivasa Sastri whom God has endowed with a generous nature not to respond to such a unanimous call from South Africa. It is almost a foregone conclusion that the appointment will be duly made and very shortly announced.

The first Agent-General will have his work cut out for him. Both the Union Government and our countrymen have no doubt high expectations of India's first ambassador. The Union Government no doubt think that being an Indian and a person of great distinction, he will make their path smooth with the Indian community in connection with any measures that they may take. In other words, they will expect him to be their sympathetic interpreter both to the Indian community and to the Government of India. Our countrymen equally surely expect him to insist upon an honourable and even a liberal interpretation and fulfilment of the Agreement. It is any time a delicate task to please rival claimants, more so now in South Africa where the clash of conflicting interests is simply bewildering. But I know that if anybody can hold the scales absolutely even and thus give satisfaction to all parties concerned, Sjt. Srinivasa Sastri is certainly the one to be able to do so. I feel certain that the Union Ministers do not expect the new Agent to surrender an inch of what is justly due to the Indian community. All he can be expected to do is to persuade the Indian settlers not to go behind and travel beyond the Settlement of 1914 for some time to come at any rate until they have proved themselves entitled by exemplary self-restraint and behaviour to an enlargement of the position attained by the Agreement of 1914.

Our countrymen in South Africa, if they intend to make the Agent's position fairly easy and their own position

secure, will not expect him to work wonders. It will be wrong to look forward to a complete transformation of the old position, because an honourable agreement has been arrived at and because a great countryman is going to South Africa to see to the fulfilment of that agreement. They must remember that the Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri is not going there as their Counsel briefed to attend to every individual grievance. To smother him with detailed individual grievances would be to kill the goose that lays the golden eggs. He goes there as a trustee for India's honour. He goes there to safeguard the rights and liberty of the general body of Indian settlers. He will be there to see that no fresh restrictive legislation is embarked upon by the Union Government and that the existing restrictive laws are administered liberally and with due regard to the vested rights. Any individual grievance therefore that he might be called upon to tackle will have to be in terms of the position I have set forth, that is to say, it will have to be illustrative of some general principle of wide application. Unless therefore the Indian community exercises prudential restraint upon themselves in approaching him for redress of their individual grievances, they will make the Agent's position intolerable and even useless for the high purpose for which it is intended. Indeed such an ambassador's usefulness lies not so much in work appertaining to his official capacity as to the indirect service he can render by his sociableness and by his character which leaves its impress upon anything and anybody that it comes in contact with officially or otherwise. And if our countrymen desire to make use of the great qualities of head and heart that Sjt. Sastri possesses, they will bear in mind the limitations I have endeavoured to set forth.

I understand that if Sjt. Sastri goes, Mrs. Sjt. Sastri\* too will accompany him. This will be a great gain to the settlers. Let the Indian sisters in South Africa gather round Mrs. Sastri and surround her with every affection. They will find in her an invaluable instrument of social service. She will act as a leaven in their midst to raise the general tone among the many thousand Indian sisters who are scattered throughout South Africa.

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\* Mrs. Sastri, however, did not accompany Mr. Sastri.

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## APPEAL TO SOUTH AFRICAN INDIANS

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The following appeal addressed to the Indians in South Africa by Mr. Gandhi is translated from *Navajivan* :

The Rt. Hon. Srinivasa Sastri has yielded to the pressure of friends in accepting the office of the first Ambassador for India in South Africa at the sacrifice of his cherished wishes solely with the object of serving you. It rests with you to make the best use of his services and his presence amongst you. You cannot do so unless you fulfil the following conditions :

1. You will not expect too much.
2. You will not try to seek relief in purely individual cases through him.
3. You will not swerve from truth in your dealings with him. To be false to him would be to be false to yourselves.
4. You will remain completely united.
5. You will put your own house in order and purify yourselves.

You will not assume that all your grievances will disappear with the coming of the Rt. Hon. Sastri as first Agent. He will have done enough if he succeeds in seeing that no new restrictive legislation is passed against you, that the operation of the old restrictive enactments is not made unnecessarily harsh and that the spirit of the new Agreement is carried out by the Government.

The Rt. Hon. Sastri is going there as the representative, not of individuals but of India as a whole. He is going there to uphold the prestige of India. Therefore you will not run to him for relief in every individual case. If you do, you will make the mistake of expending a pound for the matter of a penny.

Our strength depends solely on truth. No matter how you behave in your business dealings, you will never in the interests of the community think of swerving from the path of truth in your dealings with the Rt. Hon. Sastri. In attempting to deceive him you will be working your own ruin.

We here constantly receive reports of dissensions amongst you. If you go on creating different and conflicting interests, *e.g.*, the rights of the rich as distinguished from those of the poor, the rights of the North Indians as distinguished from those of the South Indians, of the colonial born as distinguished from those of the merchants, of the latter from those of the indentured, of the Transvaal Indians as distinguished from those of the Cape Indians and Natal Indians, you will lose the little that you have gained. If you want to better the position of the whole community, you will always stand united.

We are ultimately to win by our own endeavour which does not mean sharp practice but self-purification, which again means reform from within and purging ourselves of evil customs and superstitions, educating our children and contributing money for education as well as other measures of social reform. In this work of self-purification, the Rt. Hon. Sastri's profound experience as an educationist and reformer should be very helpful.

You will never get such another opportunity in the near future of ameliorating your condition. In my opinion it was impossible to find a worthier, abler and more impartial representative than the Rt. Hon. Sastri. Let us believe that the Hand of God has brought about this happy consummation. It rests with you entirely to benefit or not by the chance which God has in His mercy given you. May He show you the right path !

## INDIAN SETTLERS IN SOUTH AFRICA

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Mr. Sastri's regime was marked by considerable social and cultural impetus among the South African Indians. Mr. Gandhi was gratified to see the results of Mr. Sastri's endeavours so soon after his sojourn in South Africa, and in the columns of *Young India*, August 11, 1927, appealed to South African Indians to follow the new Agent's lead and profit "by the golden opportunity" of having "an Ambassador who has got the ability to serve them and who has in a remarkable manner the ear of the European inhabitants of South Africa".

India's first Ambassador has not allowed the grass to grow under his feet. He is busily sowing seeds of true union by a seasonable word now addressed to the Europeans and now to the Indian settlers, and he seems to be having fair success with both. Europeans gracefully acknowledge his splendid worth and exquisite impartiality. Indians gratefully recognise the immense strength of character which backs every word that this great son of India utters.

He has now appealed to them to produce an army of social workers in the cause of public health and sanitation. Let us hope that his appeal will not fall upon deaf ears, and that well-to-do and educated Indians will respond as zealously as they did when C. F. Andrews appealed to them for assistance for the scavenging work he did during the outbreak of small-pox in Durban some months ago. Agent though he is of the Government, if Reuter's report is correct, Sjt. Sastri did not spare it over its criminal indifference about the sanitary and social welfare of the indentured Indians. For the neglect of sanitation amongst the indentured Indians, three parties are really responsible: the Government of India, the



Employers, and the Local Government. If the Government of India had insisted upon a minimum standard, and if the employers had taken a human interest in the employee, and the Local Government had considered the indentured Indians as future citizens of South Africa, they would have learnt during their five years' indenture habits of modern sanitation. For during the five years of indenture they had to live like soldiers in barracks and they could have been made to conform to any reasonable sanitary regulations that might have been framed even as they were made to conform to labour regulations which were often even harsh and severe. But this is past history. There is no more indentured emigration now.

The question is how to make of the existing Indian population model citizens, and if the Government and the Indian settlers co-operate, it is not at all impossible to set a better tone and create a healthy Indian public opinion that would not tolerate any insanitation or ugliness. Let the Indian settlers do their part by forming sanitation brigades, cleaning up latrines and streets and instructing ignorant people in the elementary laws of sanitation even as they did in 1897 in Durban. Sjt. Sastri's work will be fruitless unless he is willingly, intelligently and whole-heartedly helped by the Indian settlers. They must conform to the wholesome maxim of law that those who seek justice or equity must come with clean hands. Let the settlers be clean in body, mind and soul and thus make the best use of the golden opportunity they have of having an Ambassador who has got the ability to serve them and who has in a remarkable measure the ear of the European inhabitants of South Africa.

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## SASTRI'S WORK

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Mr. Sastri's work in South Africa was not always smooth sailing. Like all good and effective work his own was marked by keen opposition by a section of the South Africans. On a certain occasion he was even roughly handled at Klerksdorp and the Union Government frankly apologised for the incident. Mr. Sastri himself showed not the least nervousness and the incident only brought in relief his courage and generosity. Mr. Gandhi commending his example wrote in *Young India* of Oct. 18, 1928 :

A graphic letter received this week from an eye-witness describes the now famous Klerksdorp incident of which the South African press is full. Though nothing remains or needs to be said from the political standpoint after the full, free and frank apology from the Union Government, too much cannot be said of Sjt. Sastri's generous and courageous behaviour in the face of a plot which might have proved fatal in its result. The letter before me shows that this true son and representative of India stood his ground without the least nervousness, even when the lights were put out by the party that had come led by the Deputy Mayor to break up the meeting he, was addressing. And when the firing of an explosive had made the meeting hall too suffocating for the audience, Sjt. Sastri went outside, and as if nothing untoward or serious had happened, finished his speech without even referring to the incident. Popular as he had already become among the Europeans of South Africa before this incident, his cool courage and generous behaviour raised him still further in their estimation.

And as he wanted no fame for himself (few men would be found shyer than Sjt. Sastri of fame), he turned

his popularity to the advancement of the cause he has represented with such singular ability and success. During his all too brief stay in South Africa, he has immensely raised the status of our countrymen in that part of the world. Let us hope that they will, by their exemplary conduct, show themselves worthy of him.

But Sastri's contribution to the solution of the difficult and delicate problem of South Africa does not rest merely upon what was after all an accident. We know nothing except through the results of the inner working of the Ambassador's office in which he had to exhaust all his art of a diplomacy that comes from a conviction of the correctness of one's cause and that spurns to do or countenance anything wrong, mean or crooked. But we do know how unsparing he has been in the use, on behalf of his cause, of the gifts of eloquence, scholarship, both English and Sanskrit, and great and varied learning with which Nature has lavishly endowed him. He has been delivering to large and select audiences of Europeans lectures on Indian philosophy and culture which have stirred European imagination and softened the hard crust of prejudice which has hitherto prevented the general body of Europeans from seeing anything good in the Indian. These lectures are perhaps his greatest and the most permanent contribution to the Indian cause in South Africa.

It must be a serious problem for the Government of India to choose Sjt. Sastri's successor. He has persistently withstood all pressure to prolong his stay in South Africa. Letters from South Africa show me how our people dread Sjt. Sastri's impending departure. It will be a calamity if a worthy successor is not found to continue the mission so successfully inaugurated and represented by Sjt. Sastri. Tradition has, I hope, been set up at the Viceregal Lodge

of treating the office of India's Agent in South Africa as neutral ground which the Government and popular parties may jointly tread. It is to be hoped that the successor to be chosen will be one who will commend himself equally to the Government and the people, and who will truly represent not merely the Government of India but the people as well.

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## THE TASK BEFORE SIR K. V. REDDI

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Mr. Gandhi welcomed Sir K. V. Reddi's appointment in succession to the Rt. Hon. Sastri and in the course of an article in *Young India* for May 1929 sketched out the scope of the work that lay before the new Agent-General. He wrote :

The office of the Agent of the Government of India in South Africa is certainly not a bed of roses. Sir K. V. Reddi, I see from the mail letter received from South Africa, is having his hands full. The greatest cause of anxiety so far as I can see is in connection with trade licences in the area known as the Gold Area in the Transvaal. The largest number of Indian traders in the Transvaal are to be found in this area and these trade licences are a matter of life and death for them. They have built up large business in the hope of being able to have their licences renewed from year to year. Having survived the danger in the Kruger regime of their businesses being summarily closed at any time, they have rightly or wrongly come to believe that their licences will be perpetually renewed so long as they carry on an honest trade. I have certainly thought that the Settlement of 1914 covered all these traders and their successors. If these were not vested rights, I do not know what vested rights could be in the Transvaal for them. But now I understand that municipalities are refusing to issue these licences, taking cover under a section of the Gold Law. Legally speaking perhaps the Gold Law would prohibit Asiatics' trading. But that law was in existence even during the Kruger regime. It was in existence in 1914 when this settlement was arrived at. Therefore Sir K. V. Reddi should have no difficulty in securing protection

for these traders. The agreement which was brought about by the Habibullah Deputation contemplates levelling up of the British Indian position in South Africa. Levelling up will be a meaningless term for these traders if the only means of earning their bread and butter is taken away from them. It is necessary therefore for public opinion here to strengthen the hands of the Agent in South Africa and the hands of the Government of India in prosecuting the claim for the protection of these traders. The matter is not free from difficulty I know. There is the general election pending in South Africa. The Union Ministers left to themselves will probably grant the protection that is so desirable. And that should be considered as obligatory if there is to be an honourable fulfilment of the Cape pact. But the electoral conditions in South Africa are not very different from these conditions in other parts of the world. But however difficult the situation may be, these traders must be protected. There is a proper, legitimate, easy way out of the difficulty apart from fresh legislation. Law 3 of 1885 of the Transvaal is still in existence. The Gold Law does not supersede that law. Therefore the Gold Law has got to be read in conjunction with the Law 3 of 1885. Now that law enables the Government to declare wards, streets and locations as proper for Indian habitation and trade. It is open therefore to the Union Government by administrative action to declare such areas where Indians are now trading to be proper places for Indian trade and residence.

There are other matters equally delicate but I need not refer to them at this stage, as the danger in connection with them is not imminent and as it is necessary for public opinion to be crystallised and to concentrate over this single imminent danger.

## SECOND CAPE TOWN AGREEMENT, 1932

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The Second Round Table Conference was held at Cape Town from the 12th January to 4th February 1932. The Indian delegation which included the Rt. Hon. Sastri, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu and Mr. Bajpai was led by the Hon. Sir Fazli Hussain, Member of the Government of India in charge of the Department of Emigration. They were helped in their work by the then Agent-General Sir K. V. Reddi and the indefatigable Mr. C. F. Andrews. The results of the Conference were announced simultaneously in the Indian Legislature and the Union Parliament on the 5th April. The aim of the Conference was to review the working of the first Agreement of 1927 with a view to bring about any modifications that experience might suggest. The members of the delegation could not, as on previous occasions, avail themselves of the advice and guidance of Mahatma Gandhi as, at the time, he was a prisoner at Yeravada. The Rt. Hon. Sastri gave expression to the feeling of the delegation on this matter in his reply to the civic address presented to him by the Corporation of Madras on April 26 :

"Twice before it has fallen to my lot to return from South Africa after fulfilling certain missions. On both these occasions, it was felt by all my colleagues that the first thing to do on return to the shores of India was to go to Mahatma Gandhi and make a representation to him of our doings. To no one could a prior report be made. If he approved of our work, that was enough—this was the feeling not merely of myself who may be considered to have a weakness for Mahatma Gandhi, but it was the feeling of all with whom I was associated. And if I may for the first time publish a secret, it was also the feeling of the Members of the Government of India. How sad I must feel now, you can imagine, when it was not possible for me to make a similar report to the one man in all India who has a right to form a judgment of South African affairs and lead public sentiment in the country. But I have a feeling that if it had been possible to do as I did on the two previous occasions, the result would have been exactly similar. The Mahatma, I think, would have blessed our work and would have said that the Indian delegation could not have done better."

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# PASSIVE RESISTANCE

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## THE GENESIS OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

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In answer to a question put to him by the Rev. Joseph Doke, his biographer, as to the birth and evolution of this principle so far as he was concerned, Mr. Gandhi replied as follows :

"I remember," he said, "how one verse of a Gujarati poem which, as a child I learned at school, clung to me. In substance it was this :

'If a man gives you a drink of water and you give him a drink in return, that is nothing.

Real beauty consists in doing good against evil.'

"As a child, this verse had a powerful influence over me and I tried to carry it into practice. Then came the Sermon on the Mount."

"But," said I, "surely the *Bhagavad Gita* came first?"

"No," he replied, "of course I knew the *Bhagavad Gita* in Sanskrit tolerably well, but I had not made its teaching in that particular a study. It was the New Testament which really awakened me to the rightness and value of Passive Resistance. When I read in the 'Sermon on the Mount' such passages as 'Resist not him that is evil but whosoever smiteth thee on thy right cheek turn to him the other also' and 'Love your enemies and pray for them that persecute you, that ye may be sons of your Father which is in heaven.' I was simply overjoyed and found my own opinion confirmed where I least expected it. The *Bhagavad Gita* deepened the impression and Tolstoy's 'The Kingdom of God is within you' gave it a permanent form."



Tolstoy, Ruskin, Thoreau and the Passive Resistance Movement in England "had proved an object lesson, not only to him but to his people, of singular force and interest". Mr. Gandhi's ideal "is not so much to resist evil passively, it has its active compliment—to do good in return to evil". In answer to Rev. Joseph Doke, he said :

I do not like the term "passive resistance". It fails to convey all I mean. It describes a method but gives no hint of the system of which it is only part. Real beauty, and that is my aim, is in doing good against evil. Still, I adopt the phrase because it is well known and easily understood and because, at present, the great majority of my people can only grasp that idea. To me the ideas which underlie the Gujarati hymn and the "Sermon on the Mount" should revolutionise the whole of life.

### SOUL FORCE *versus* PHYSICAL FORCE

The advantages of soul force against physical force are well pictured by Mr. Gandhi in the following words :

Passive resistance is an all sided sword ; it can be used anyhow ; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen. Competition between passive resisters does not exhaust them. The sword of passive resistance does not require a scabbard and one cannot be forcibly dispossessed of it.

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## THE BIRTH OF SATYAGRAHA

In one of the chapters in his autobiography, Mahatma Gandhi explains how the principle called *Satyagraha* came into being before even the name was invented. After saying that *Brahmacharya* which he had been observing since 1900, was sealed with a vow in the middle of 1906, Mr. Gandhi writes:

Events were so shaping themselves in Johannesburg as to make this self-purification on my part a preliminary as it were to *Satyagraha*. I can now see that all the principal events of my life, culminating in the vow of *Brahmacharya*, were secretly preparing me for it.

The principle called *Satyagraha* came into being before that name was invented. Indeed when it was born, I myself could not say what it was. In Gujarati also we used the English phrase 'passive resistance' to describe it. When in a meeting of Europeans I found that the term 'passive resistance' was too narrowly construed, that it was supposed to be a weapon of the weak, that it could be characterised by hatred and that it could finally manifest itself as violence, I had to demur to these statements and explain the real nature of the Indian movement. It was clear that a new word must be coined by the Indians to designate their struggle.

But I could not for the life of me find out a new name and therefore offered a nominal prize through the *Indian Opinion* to the reader who made the best suggestion on the subject. As a result Maganlal Gandhi coined the word '*Sadagraha*' (*Sat*=truth, *Agraha*=firmness) and won the prize. But in order to make it clearer I changed the word to '*Satyagraha*' which has since become current in Gujarati as a designation for the struggle.

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## PASSIVE RESISTANCE IN SOUTH AFRICA

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As to how the movement originated in South Africa, here is Mr. Gandhi's statement:

Some years ago when I began to take an active part in the public life of Natal, the adoption of this method occurred to me as the best course to pursue should petitions fail, but in the then unorganised condition of our Indian community, the attempt seemed useless. Here however in Johannesburg when the Asiatic Registration Act was introduced, the Indian community was so deeply stirred and so knit together in a common determination to resist it that the moment seemed opportune. Some action they would take; it seemed to be best for the Colony and altogether right that their action should not take a riotous form but that of Passive Resistance. They had no vote in Parliament, no hope of obtaining redress, no one would listen to their complaints. The Christian Churches were indifferent, so I proposed this pathway of suffering and after much discussion it was adopted. In September 1906, there was a large gathering of Indians in the old Empire Theatre when the position was thoroughly faced, and under the inspiration of deep feeling and on the proposal of one of our leading men, they swore a solemn oath committing themselves to Passive Resistance.

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## THE ETHICS OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

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In an address that Mr. Gandhi delivered before an audience of Europeans at the Germiston (Transvaal) Literary and Debating Society in 1908, he said :

Passive resistance was a misnomer. But the expression had been accepted as it was popular and had been for a long time used by those who carried out in practice the idea denoted by the term. The idea was more completely and better expressed by the term "soul force". As such, it was as old as the human race. Active resistance was better expressed by the term "body force". Jesus Christ, Daniel, and Socrates represented the purest form of passive resistance or soul force. All these teachers counted their bodies as nothing in comparison to their soul. Tolstoy was the best and brightest (modern) exponent of the doctrine. He not only expounded it but lived according to it. In India, the doctrine was understood and commonly practised long before it came into vogue in Europe. It was easy to see that soul force was infinitely superior to body force. If people in order to secure redress of wrongs resorted to soul force, much of the present suffering would be avoided. In any case the wielding of this force never caused suffering to others. So that whenever it was misused, it only injured the users and not those against whom it was used. Like virtue it has its own reward. There was no such thing as failure in the use of this kind of force. "Resist not evil" meant that evil was not to be repelled by

evil but by good ; in other words, physical force was to be opposed not by its like but by soul force. The same idea was expressed in Indian philosophy by the expression, "freedom from injury to every living thing". The exercise of this doctrine involved physical suffering on the part of those who practised it. But it was a known fact that the sum of such suffering was greater rather than less in the world. That being so, all that was necessary for those who recognised the immeasurable power of soul force, was consciously and deliberately to accept physical suffering as their lot and when this was done the very suffering became a source of joy to the sufferer. It was quite plain that passive resistance thus understood was infinitely superior to physical force and that it required greater courage than the latter. No transition was therefore possible from passive resistance to active or physical resistance. . . . The only condition of a successful use of this force was a recognition of the existence of the soul as apart from the body and its permanent and superior nature. And this recognition must amount to a living faith and not a mere intellectual grasp. ;

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## PASSIVE RESISTERS IN THE TOLSTOY FARM

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Writing to a friend from the Tolstoy Farm where he was living with a number of passive resisters' families, Mr. Gandhi says touching manual labour :

I prepare the bread that is required on the farm. The general opinion about it is, that it is well made. Manilal and a few others have learnt how to prepare it. We put in no yeast and no baking powder. We grind our own wheat. We have just prepared some marmalade from the oranges grown on the farm. I have also learnt how to prepare coromel coffee. It can be given as a beverage even to babies. The passive resisters on the farm have given up the use of tea and coffee and taken to coromel coffee prepared on the farm. It is made from wheat which is first baked in a certain way and then ground. We intend to sell our surplus production of the above three articles to the public later on. Just at present we are working as labourers on the construction work that is going on, on the farm and have not time to produce more of the articles above-mentioned than we need for ourselves.

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## THE MEANING OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

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The meaning and significance of Passive Resistance as the weapon of the truly strong is well brought out in Mr. Gandhi's well known book "Hind Swaraj". Passive Resistance is as far removed from cowardice as from brute force and is described as most efficacious alike for individuals and for groups of men or women. We make no apology for reproducing this excellent chapter which is written in the form of a dialogue (in which the Editor is presumably Mr. Gandhi himself). As Mr. Gandhi himself explained "the book 'Indian Home Rule' was written in order to demonstrate the sublimity of *Satyagraha*" and that book, he added, "is a true measure of my faith in its efficacy".

READER: Is there any historical evidence as to the success of what you have called soul force or truth force? No instance seems to have happened of any nation having risen through soul force. I still think that the evil-doers will not cease doing evil without physical punishment.

EDITOR: The poet Tulsidas has said: "Of religion, pity or love is the root, as egotism of the body. Therefore, we should not abandon pity so long as we are alive." This appears to me to be a scientific truth. I believe in it as much as I believe in two and two being four. The force of love is the same as the force of the soul or truth. We have evidence of its working at every step. The universe would disappear without the existence of that force. But you ask for historical evidence. It is, therefore, necessary to know what history means. The Gujarati equivalent means: "It so happened." If that is the meaning of history, it is possible to give copious evidence. But, if it means the doings of kings and emperors, there can be no evidence of soul force or passive resistance in such history. You cannot expect silver ore in a tin-mine. History, as we know it, is a record of the wars of the world, and so there is a proverb among

Englishmen that a nation which has no history, that is, no wars, is a happy nation. How kings played, how they became enemies of one another and how they murdered one another is found accurately recorded in history and if this were all that had happened in the world, it would have been ended long ago. If the story of the universe had commenced with wars, not a man would have been found alive to-day. Those people who have been warred against have disappeared, as for instance, the natives of Australia, of whom hardly a man was left alive by the intruders. Mark, please, that these natives did not use soul force in self-defence, and it does not require much foresight to know that the Australians will share the same fate as their victims. "Those that wield the sword shall perish by the sword." With us the proverb is that "professional swimmers will find a watery grave".

The fact that there are so many men still alive in the world shows that it is based not on the force of arms but on the force of truth or love. Therefore the greatest and most unimpeachable evidence of the success of this force is to be found in the fact that, in spite of the wars of the world, it still lives on.

Thousands, indeed tens of thousands, depend for their existence on a very active working of this force. Little quarrels of millions of families in their daily lives disappear before the exercise of this force. Hundreds of nations live in peace. History does not, and cannot, take note of this fact. History is really a record of every interruption of the even working of the force of love or of the soul. Two brothers quarrel; one of them repeats and re-awakens the love that was lying dormant in him; the two again begin to live in peace; nobody takes note of this. But, if the two brothers, through the intervention of solicitors or some



other reason, take up arms or go to law—which is another form of the exhibition of brute force—their doings would be immediately noticed in the press, they would be the talk of their neighbours and would probably go down to history. And what is true of families and communities is true of nations. There is no reason to believe that there is one law for families and another for nations. History then is a record of an interruption of the course of Nature. Soul force, being natural, is not noted in history.\*

READER: According to what you say, it is plain that instances of the kind of passive resistance are not to be found in history. It is necessary to understand this passive resistance more fully. It will be better therefore if you enlarge upon it.

EDITOR: Passive resistance is a method of securing rights by personal suffering; it is the reverse of resistance by arms. When I refuse to do a thing that is repugnant to my conscience, I use soul force. For instance, the Government of the day has passed a law which is applicable to me. I do not like it. If, by using violence, I force the Government to repeal the law, I am employing what may be termed body force. If I do not obey the law and accept the penalty for its breach, I use soul force. It involves sacrifice of self.

Everybody admits that sacrifice of self is infinitely superior to sacrifice of others. Moreover, if this kind of force is used in a cause that is unjust, only the person using it suffers. He does not make others suffer for his mistakes. Men have before now done many things which were subsequently found to have been wrong. No man can claim to be absolutely in the right or that a particular thing is wrong, because he thinks so, but it is wrong for him so long as that is his deliberate judgment. It is

therefore meet that he should not do that which he knows to be wrong and suffer the consequence whatever it may be. This is the key to the use of soul force.

READER: You would then disregard laws—this is rank disloyalty. We have always been considered a law-abiding nation. You seem to be going even beyond the extremists. They say that we must obey the laws that have been passed, but that, if the laws be bad, we must drive out the law-givers even by force.

EDITOR: Whether I go beyond them or whether I do not is a matter of no consequence to either of us. We simply want to find out what is right and to act accordingly. The real meaning of the statement that we are a law-abiding nation is that we are passive resisters. When we do not like certain laws, we do not break the heads of law-givers but we suffer and do not submit to the laws. That we should obey laws whether good or bad is a new fangled notion. There was no such thing in former days. The people disregarded those laws they did not like and suffered the penalties for their breach. It is contrary to our manhood if we obey laws repugnant to our conscience. Such teaching is opposed to religion and means slavery. If the Government were to ask us to go about without any clothing, should we do so? If I were a passive resister, I would say to them that I would have nothing to do with their law. But we have so forgotten ourselves and become so compliant that we do not mind any degrading law.

A man who has realised his manhood, who fears only God, will fear no one else. Man-made laws are not necessarily binding on him. Even the Government do not expect any such thing from us. They do not say: "You must do such and such a thing," but they say: "If you

do not do it, we will punish you." We are sunk so low that we fancy that it is our duty and our religion to do what the law lays down. If man will only realise that it is unmaoly to obey laws that are unjust, no man's tyranny will enslave him. 'This is the key to self-rule or home-rule.

It is a superstition and an ungodly thing to believe that an act of a majority binds a minority. Many examples can be given in which acts of majorities will be found to have been wrong and those of minorities to "have been right. All reforms owe their origin to the initiation of minorities in opposition to majorities. If among a band of robbers, a knowledge of robbing is obligatory, is a pious man to accept the obligation? So long as the superstition that men should obey unjust laws exists, so long will their slavery exist. And a passive resister alone can remove such a superstition.

To use brute force, to use gunpowder is contrary to passive resistance, for it means that we want our opponent to do by force that which we desire but he does not. And if such a use of force is justifiable, surely he is entitled to do likewise by us. And so we should never come to an agreement. We may simply fancy, like the blind horse moving in a circle round a mill, that we are making progress. Those who believe that they are not bound to obey laws which are repugnant to their conscience have only the remedy of passive resistance open to them. Any other must lead to disaster.

READER: From what you say, I deduce that passive resistance is a splendid weapon of the weak, but that when they are strong, they may take up arms.

EDITOR: This is gross ignorance. Thus passive resistance, that is, soul force, is matchless. It is superior to the force of arms. How then can

it be considered only a weapon of the weak? Physical force men are strangers to the courage that is requisite in a passive resister. Do you believe that a coward can ever disobey a law that he dislikes? Extremists are considered to be advocates of brute force. Why do they then talk about obeying laws? I do not blame them. They can say nothing else. When they succeed in driving out the English and they themselves become governors, they will want you and me to obey their laws. And that is a fitting thing for their constitution. But a passive resister will say he will not obey a law that is against his conscience, even though he may be blown to pieces at the mouth of a cannon.

What do you think? Wherein is courage required—in blowing others to pieces from behind a cannon or with a smiling face to approach a cannon and to be blown to pieces? Who is the true warrior—he who keeps death always as a bosom-friend or he who controls the death of others? Believe me that a man devoid of courage and manhood can never be a passive resister.

This, however, I will admit: that even a man weak in body is capable of offering this resistance. One man can offer it just as well as millions. Both men and women can indulge in it. It does not require the training of an army; it needs no Ju-jitsu. Control over the mind is alone necessary and when that is attained, man is free like the king of the forest and his very glance withers the enemy.

Passive resistance is an all sided sword; it can be used anyhow; it blesses him who uses it and him against whom it is used. Without drawing a drop of blood, it produces far-reaching results. It never rusts and cannot be stolen. Competition between passive

resisters does not exhaust them. The sword of passive resistance does not require a scabbard. It is strange indeed that you should consider such a weapon to be a weapon merely of the weak.

READER: You have said that passive resistance is a speciality of India. Have cannons never been used in India?

EDITOR: Evidently, in your opinion, India means its few princes. To me, it means its teeming millions, on whom depends the existence of its princes and our own.

Kings will always use their kingly weapons. To use force is bred in them. They want to command, but those who have to obey commands, do not want guns; and these are in a majority throughout the world. They have to learn either body force or soul force. Where they learn the former, both the rulers and the ruled become like so many mad men, but where they learn soul force, the commands of the rulers do not go beyond the point of their swords, for true men disregard unjust commands. Peasants have never been subdued by the sword and never will be. They do not know the use of the sword and they are not frightened by the use of it by others. That nation is great which rests its head upon death as its pillow. Those who defy death are free from all fear. For those who are labouring under the delusive charms of brute force, this picture is not overdrawn. The fact is that in India, the nation at large has generally used passive resistance in all departments of life. We cease to co-operate with our rulers when they displease us. This is passive resistance.

I remember an instance when, in a small principality, the villagers were offended by some command issued by the prince. The former immediately began vacating the village. The prince became nervous, apologised to his

subjects and withdrew his command. Many such instances can be found in India. Real home rule is possible only where passive resistance is the guiding force of the people. Any other rule is foreign rule.

READER: Then you will say that it is not at all necessary for us to train the body?

EDITOR: I will certainly not say any such thing. It is difficult to become a passive resister unless the body is trained.\* As a rule, the mind residing in a body that has become weakened by pampering, is also weak and where there is no strength of mind, there can be no strength of soul. We will have to improve our physique by getting rid of infant marriages and luxurious living. If I were to ask a man having a shattered body to face a cannon's mouth, I would make of myself a laughing-stock.

READER: From what you say, then it would appear that it is not a small thing to become a passive resister and, if that is so, I would like you to explain how a man may become a passive resister.

EDITOR: To become a passive resister is easy enough, but it is also equally difficult. I have known a lad of fourteen years become a passive resister; I have known also sick people doing likewise; and I have also known physically strong and otherwise happy people being unable to take up passive resistance. After a great deal of experience, it seems to me that those who want to become passive resisters for the service of the country have to observe perfect chastity, adopt poverty, follow truth, and cultivate fearlessness.

Chastity is one of the greatest disciplines without which the mind cannot attain requisite firmness. A man who is unchaste loses stamina, becomes emasculated and cowardly. He whose mind is given over to

animal passions is not capable of any great effort. This can be proved by innumerable instances. What, then, is a married person to do, is the question that arises naturally; and yet it need not. When a husband and wife gratify the passions, it is no less an animal indulgence on that account. Such an indulgence, except for perpetuating the race, is strictly prohibited. But a passive resister has to avoid even that very limited indulgence, because he can have no desire for progeny. A married man therefore can observe perfect chastity. This subject is not capable of being treated at greater length. Several questions arise: How is one to carry one's wife with one? What are her rights, and such other questions? Yet those who wish to take part in a great work are bound to solve these puzzles.

Just as there is necessity for chastity, so is there for poverty. Pecuniary ambition and passive resistance cannot well go together. Those who have money are not expected to throw it away, but they are expected to be indifferent about it. They must be prepared to lose every penny rather than give up passive resistance.

Passive resistance has been described in the course of our discussion as truth force. Truth, therefore, has necessarily to be followed and that at any cost. In this connection, academic questions such as whether a man may not lie in order to save a life, etc. arise, but these questions occur only to those who wish to justify lying. Those who want to follow truth every time are not placed in such a quandary, and if they are, they are still saved from a false position.

Passive resistance cannot proceed a step without fearlessness. Those alone can follow the path of passive resistance who are free from fear, whether as to their

possessions, false honour, their relatives, the Government, bodily injuries, death.

These observances are not to be abandoned in the belief that they are difficult. Nature has implanted in the human breast ability to cope with any difficulty or suffering that may come to man unprovoked. These qualities are worth having even for those who do not wish to serve the country. Let there be no mistake as those who want to train themselves in the use of arms are also obliged to have these qualities more or less. Everybody does not become a warrior for the wish. A would-be warrior will have to observe chastity and to be satisfied with poverty as his lot. A warrior without fearlessness cannot be conceived of. It may be thought that he would not need to be exactly truthful, but that quality follows real fearlessness. When a man abandons truth, he does so owing to fear in some shape or form. The above four attributes, then, need not frighten any one. It may be as well here to note that a physical-force man has to have many other useless qualities which a passive resister never needs. And you will find that whatever extra effort a swordsman needs is due to lack of fearlessness. If he is an embodiment of the latter, the sword will drop from his hand at that very moment. He does not need its support. One who is free from hatred requires no sword. A man with a stick suddenly came face to face with a lion and instinctively raised his weapon in self-defence. The man saw that he had only prated about fearlessness when there was none in him. That moment he dropped the stick and found himself free from all fear.



## PASSIVE RESISTANCE IN ACTION

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It was not long before an opportunity occurred for Mr. Gandhi to put into practice the principle of Passive Resistance which was steadily taking shape in Tolstoy Farm. It was evident that every one in the farm was, sooner or later, drawn into the movement by the sheer power of its inspiration and the martyrs felt "the joy of the early Christians when they suffered persecution for righteousness' sake". Mr. Gandhi writes:

"We now decided to take a step which we had reserved till the last and which in the event fully answered our expectations. I had contemplated sacrificing all the settlers in Phoenix at a critical period. That was to be my final offering to the God of Truth. The settlers at Phoenix were mostly my close co-workers and relations. The idea was to send all of them to jail with the exception of a few who would be required for the conduct of *Indian Opinion* and of children below sixteen. This was the maximum of sacrifice open to me in the circumstances.

I went to Phoenix and talked to the settlers about my plans. First of all I held a consultation with the sisters living there. I knew that the step of sending women to jail was fraught with serious risk. Most of the sisters in Phoenix spoke Gujarati. They had not had the training or experience of the Transvaal sisters. Moreover, most of them were related to me and might think of going to jail only on account of my influence with them. If afterwards they flinched at the time of actual trial or could not stand the jail, they might be led to apologize, thus not only giving me a deep shock but also causing serious damage to the movement.

I decided not to broach the subject to my wife as she could not say 'No' to any proposal I made, and if she said 'Yes', I would not know what value to attach to her assent, and also because I knew that in a serious matter like this the husband should leave the wife to take what step she liked on her own initiative, and should not be offended at all even if she did not take any step whatever.

I talked to the other sisters who readily fell in with my proposal and expressed their readiness to go to jail. They assured me that they would complete their term in jail, come what might. My wife overheard my conversation with the sisters, and, addressing me, said :

'I am sorry that you are not telling me about this. What defect is there in me which disqualifies me for jail? I also wish to take the path to which you are inviting the others.'

'You know I am the last person to cause you pain,' I replied. 'There is no question of my distrust in you. I would be only too glad if you went to jail, but it should not appear at all as if you went at my instance. In matters like this every one should act relying solely upon one's own strength and courage. If I asked you, you might be inclined to go just for the sake of complying with my request. And then, if you began to tremble in the law court or were terrified by hardships in jail, I could not find fault with you, but how would it stand with me? How could I then harbour you or look the world in the face? It is fears like these which have prevented me from asking you, too, to court jail.'

'You may have nothing to do with me,' she said, 'if, being unable to stand jail, I secure my release by

an apology. If you can endure hardships and so can my boys, why cannot I? I am bound to join the struggle.'

'Then I am bound to admit you to it,' said I. 'You know my conditions and you know my temperament. Even now reconsider the matter if you like; and if after mature thought you deliberately come to the conclusion not to join the movement, you are free to withdraw. And you must understand that there is nothing to be ashamed of in changing your decision even now.'

'I have nothing to think about,' said she; 'I am fully determined.'

I suggested to the other settlers also that each should take his or her decision independently of all others. Again and again, and in a variety of ways, I pressed this condition on their attention, that none should fall away whether the struggle was short or long, whether the Phoenix settlement flourished or faded, and whether he or she kept good health or fell ill in jail. All were ready."

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## A LESSON TO INDIA

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Mr. Gandhi wrote these lines in reply to the Rev. Joseph Doke, his well known biographer, who had invited him to send a message to his countrymen in India with reference to the unrest in 1909 :

The struggle in the Transvaal is not without its interest for India. We are engaged in raising men who will give a good account of themselves in any part of the world. We have undertaken the struggle on the following assumptions :

(1) Passive resistance is always infinitely superior to physical force.

(2) There is no inherent barrier between European and Indian anywhere.

(3) Whatever may have been the motives of the British rulers in India, there is a desire on the part of the nation at large to see that justice is done. It would be a calamity to break the connection between the British people and the people of India. If we are treated as, or assert our right to be treated as, free men, whether in India or elsewhere, the connection between the British people and the people of India can not only be mutually beneficial, but is calculated to be of enormous advantage to the world religiously and, therefore, socially and politically. In my opinion, each nation is the complement of the other.

Passive resistance in connection with the Transvaal struggle I should hold justifiable on the strength of any of these propositions. It may be a slow remedy, not only for our ills in the Transvaal, but for all the political and other troubles from which our people suffer in India.

## A MESSAGE TO THE CONGRESS

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The following message to the Congress was published in Mr. Natesan's *Indian Review* for December 1909 :

You have cabled me for a message to the forthcoming Congress. I do not know that I am at all competent to send any message. Simple courtesy, however, demands that I should say something in reply to your cable. At the present moment I am unable to think of anything but the task immediately before me, namely, the struggle that is going on in the Transvaal. I hope our countrymen throughout India realise that it is national in its aim, in that it has been undertaken to save India's honour. I may be wrong, but I have not hesitated publicly to remark that it is the greatest struggle of modern times, because it is the purest as well in its goal as in its methods. Our countrymen in the Transvaal are fighting for the right of cultured Indians to enter the Transvaal in common with Europeans. In this the fighters have no personal interest to serve, nor is there any material gain to accrue to anybody after the above-mentioned right (which has for the first time in Colonial Legislation been taken away) is restored. The sons of Hindustan who are in the Transvaal, are showing that they are capable of fighting for an ideal, pure and simple. The methods adopted in order to secure relief are also equally pure and equally simple. Violence in any shape or form is entirely eschewed. They believe that self-suffering is the only true and effective means to procure lasting reforms. They endeavour to meet and conquer hatred by love. They oppose the brute or physical force

by soul force. They hold that loyalty to an earthly sovereign or an earthly constitution is subordinate to loyalty to God and His constitution. In interpreting God's constitution through their conscience they admit that they may possibly be wrong. Hence, in resisting or disregarding those man-made laws which they consider to be inconsistent with the eternal laws of God, they accept with resignation the penalties provided by the former and trust to the working of time and to the best in human nature to make good their position. If they are wrong, they alone suffer and the established order of things continues. In the process, over 2,500 Indians or nearly one-half of the resident Indian population, or one-fifth of the possible Indian population of the Transvaal, have suffered imprisonment carrying with it terrible hardships. Some of them have gone to gaol again and again. Many families have been impoverished. Several merchants have accepted privation rather than surrender their manhood. Incidentally, the Hindu-Mahomedan problem has been solved in South Africa. We realise there that the one cannot do without the other. Mahomedans, Parsis and Hindus, or taking them provincially, Bengalees, Madrasees, Punjabis, Afghanistanees, and Bombayites have fought shoulder to shoulder.

I venture to suggest that a struggle such as this is worthy of occupying the best if not, indeed, the exclusive attention of the Congress. If it be not impertinent I would like to distinguish between this and the other items on the programme of the Congress. The opposition to the laws or the policy with which the other items deal does not involve any material suffering; the Congress activity consists in a mental attitude without corresponding action. In the Transvaal case the law and the policy it enunciates

being wrong, we disregard it, and therefore consciously and deliberately suffer material and physical injury; action follows and corresponds to our mental attitude. If the view here submitted be correct, it will be allowed that in asking for the best place in the Congress programme for Transvaal question, I have not been unreasonable. May I also suggest that in pondering over and concentrating our attention upon passive resistance such as has been described above, we would perchance find out that, for the many ills we suffer in India, passive resistance is an infallible panacea. It is worthy of careful study and I am sure it will be found that it is the only weapon that is suited to the genius of our people and our land, which is the nursery of the most ancient religions and has very little to learn from modern civilization—a civilization based on violence of the blackest type, largely a negation of the divine in man and which is rushing headlong to its own ruin.

## GAINS OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE STRUGGLE

The following is an English rendering from Gujarati, originally published in Mr. Natesan's *Indian Review* for November-December 1911:

Very often we come across Indians who question the utility of passive resistance as carried on in this country (South Africa). They say that what our people have got as a result of the terrible sufferings in the jails and outside is some proposed modification in the Immigration Law which they cannot understand and which is hardly likely to be of any practical value to them. The maximum gain from the struggle, according to their view, is that thereby a few very highly educated Indians who are least likely to be of any use to them will find it possible to enter the country. For the edification of those who hold the above view, we propose to give a short summary of the gains thereof:

That thereby the Indian community could preserve its national self-respect; according to our proverb, "one who can preserve his self-respect can preserve everything else".

• That thereby the Registration Act of 1907 has got to be swept off the statute-book.

That thereby the whole of India became acquainted with our disabilities in this country.

That through it other nations became acquainted with our grievances and began to appreciate us better.

That by it was brought about the prohibition of Indian indentured labour to Natal by the Indian Government.

That the struggle helped to bring about some desirable modification in the Licencing Law of Natal.

That it brought about the disallowance of the Registration Law of Rhodesia which was framed on the same basis as that of the Transvaal.



That it brought about the disallowance of the most obnoxious Licencing Law of Natal. Any one who doubts this statement had better refer to the despatch of the Imperial Government disallowing the Act and the reasons for such disallowance.

That but for the struggle the other Colonies in South Africa would have passed Immigration Restriction Laws similar to the law in the Transvaal.

That but for the struggle, the Transvaal Legislature would have passed other Anti-Asiatic Law as harsh as the Immigration Restriction Law.

That the struggle brought about the repeal of the Railway Regulations which differentiated between the white and the coloured people and that they are now applicable to all equally.

That it is a matter of common knowledge that the Transvaal Registration Law of 1907 was the first of a series of Anti-Asiatic Laws that were proposed to be added to the statute-book. The unanimous opposition of the Indians to this law, however, deterred the Transvaal Government from taking up the other legislation.

That it brought into existence a committee consisting of Europeans under the presidency of Mr. Hosken which could not have come into existence otherwise. This committee is likely to be useful to Indians in their future struggle.

That besides those who have already joined the committee, it has created in a great many other Europeans feelings of sympathy and regard for Indians.

That thereby the Indian community has gained a great deal of prestige and that those Europeans who before the struggle used to treat Indians with contempt, have been taught to show them due regard and consideration.

That the Government now feels that the strength which is in us is unconquerable.

That the majority of the Indians domiciled in the country showed themselves quite cowardly before the struggle. It has however given them more vigour and courage. Those who were afraid even to whisper before that time, are now boldly speaking out their minds as men.

That, whereas before the struggle, there was no woman's movement in Johannesburg, now there is a class opened under Mrs. Vogle who gives her services free to the community.

That jail life which seemed so dreadful to Indians before the struggle, is no longer terrifying to them.

That although on account of the struggle, Mr. Cachalia and others have lost almost all their earthly possessions, they feel that as a consequence thereof, they have acquired much strength of mind and character which they could not have purchased with any amount of money and which nothing but the actual struggle could have infused into them.

That but for the struggle, the Indian community would have continued to remain ignorant of the fact that in the Tamil section thereof, there were men and women who were great assets to this people and who would do credit to any community.

That the struggle which brought about the Transvaal Law of 1908, revived the rights of hundreds of Indians who had left the country during the great war.

That the Indian community now stands before the world fully acquitted of all charges of fraud which were levelled against them before the present settlement.

That the withdrawal of the Bill introduced in the Union Parliament exempting Europeans from the payment

of the poll-tax in Natal is one of the freshest instances showing the dread the authorities have of a fresh passive resistance struggle on the part of Indians.

That the struggle made General Smuts rescind his own orders on three and the Imperial Government on two different occasions.

That before the struggle, all laws used to be framed against us independently of us and what we thought of them, but that since the struggle the authorities are obliged to take our views and feelings into their consideration and they certainly show more regard to them.

That as a consequence of the struggle, the prestige of the Indian community stands on a much higher level than ever before. Better this than the riches of the whole world.

That the community has demonstrated to the world the invulnerability of "Truth".

That by keeping its full faith in God, the community has vindicated the glory of religion. "Where there is truth and where there is religion, there alone is victory."

On bestowing more thought on the question and looking at it from its various bearings, one can find much more to say as to the fruits thereof than what has been stated above. The last on the list, however, is incomparably the best of them all. Such a great fight could not have been carried on successfully without fully trusting in God. He was our only prop all that time. Those who put their implicit faith in Him cannot but reach their aims. The struggle will not have been carried on in vain, if, as a result of it, we shall have learnt to put still more trust in Him.

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## THEORY & PRACTICE OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

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Mr. Gandhi contributed the following paper to the Golden Number of the *Indian Opinion* in 1914 :

The term passive resistance does not fit the activity of the Indian community during the past eight years. Its equivalent in the vernacular rendered into English means truth force. I think Tolstoy called it also soul force or love force and so it is. Carried out to its utmost limit, this force is independent of pecuniary or other material assistance ; certainly even in its elementary form of physical force or violence. Indeed, violence is the negation of this great spiritual force which can only be cultivated or wielded by those who will entirely eschew violence. It is a force that may be used by individuals as well as by communities. It may be used as well in political as in domestic affairs. Its universal applicability is a demonstration of its permanence and invincibility. It can be used alike by men, women and children. It is totally untrue to say that it is a force to be used only by the weak so long as they are not capable of meeting violence by violence. This superstition arises from the incompleteness of the English expression. It is impossible for those who consider themselves to be weak to apply this force. Only those who realise that there is something in man which is superior to the brute nature in him, and that the latter always yields to it, can effectively be passive resisters. This force is to violence and therefore to all tyranny, all injustice, what light is

to darkness. In politics, its use is based upon the immutable maxim that government of the people is possible only so long as they consent either consciously or unconsciously to be governed. We did not want to be governed by the Asiatic Act of 1907 of the Transvaal and it had to go before this mighty force. Two courses were open to us—to use violence when we were called upon to submit to the Act, or to suffer the penalties prescribed under the Act, and thus to draw out and exhibit the force of the soul within us for a period long enough to appeal to the sympathetic chord in the governors or the law-makers. We have taken long to achieve what we set about striving for. That was because our passive resistance was not of the most complete type. All passive resisters do not understand the full value of the force, nor have we men who always from conviction refrain from violence. The use of this force requires the adoption of poverty, in the sense that we must be indifferent whether we have the wherewithal to feed or clothe ourselves. During the past struggle, all passive resisters, if any at all, were not prepared to go that length. Some again were only passive resisters, so-called. They came without any conviction, often with mixed motives, less often with impure motives. Some even, whilst engaged in the struggle, would gladly have resorted to violence but for most vigilant supervision. Thus it was that the struggle became prolonged; for the exercise of the purest soul force in its perfect form brings about instantaneons relief. For this exercise, prolonged training of the individual soul is an absolute necessity so that a perfect passive resister has to be almost, if not entirely, a perfect man. We cannot all suddenly become such men, but if my proposition is correct—as I know it

to be correct—the greater the spirit of passive resistance in us, the better men we will become. Its use therefore is, I think, indisputable and it is a force which, if it became universal, would revolutionise social ideals and do away with despotisms and the ever-growing militarism under which the nations of the West are groaning and are being almost crushed to death—that militarism which promises to overwhelm even the nations of the East. If the past struggle has produced even a few Indians who would dedicate themselves to the task of becoming passive resisters as nearly perfect as possible, they would not only have served themselves in the truest sense of the term, they would also have served humanity at large. Thus viewed, passive resistance is the noblest and the best education. It should come, not after the ordinary education in letters of children, but it should precede it. It will not be denied that a child, before it begins to write its alphabet and to gain worldly knowledge, should know what the soul is, what truth is, what love is, what powers are latent in the soul. It should be an essential of real education that a child should learn that, in the struggle of life, it can easily conquer hate by love, untruth by truth, violence by self-suffering. It was because I felt the forces of this truth that, during the later part of the struggle, I endeavoured as much as I could to train the children at Tolstoy Farm and then at Phoenix along these lines, and one of the reasons for my departure to India is still further to realise, as I already do in part, my own imperfection as a passive resister and then to try to perfect myself, for I believe that it is in India that the nearest approach to perfection is most possible.

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## SOUL FORCE AND INDIAN POLITICS

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The following is a translation of the original in Gujarati published during the agitation against the internment of Mrs. Besant and her two colleagues in June 1917 :

The English expression "passive resistance" hardly denotes the force about which I propose to write. But *Satyagraha*, i.e., truth force, correctly conveys the meaning. Truth force is soul force and "is the opposite of the force of arms. The former is a purely religious instrument; its conscious use is therefore possible only in men religiously inclined. Prahlad, Mirabai and others were passive resisters (in the sense in which the expression is here used). At the time of the Moroccan War, the French guns were playing upon the Arabs of Morocco. The latter believed that they were fighting for their religion. They defied death and with 'Allah' on their lips rushed into the cannon's mouth. There was no room left here for them to deal death. The French gunners declined to work their guns against these Arabs. They threw up their hats in the air, rushed forward and with shouts of cheer embraced these brave Arabs. This is an illustration of passive resistance and its victory: The Arabs were not consciously passive resisters. They prepared to face death in a fit of frenzy. The spirit of love was absent in them. A passive resister has no spirit of envy in him. It is not anger that bids him court death. But it is by reason of his ability to suffer that he refuses to surrender to the so-called enemy or the tyrant. Thus a passive resister has need to have courage, forgiveness

and love. Imam Hussain and his little band refused to yield to what to them appeared to be an unjust order. They knew at the time that death alone would be their lot. If they yielded to it, they felt that their manhood and their religion would be in jeopardy. They therefore welcomed the embrace of death. Imam Hussain preferred the slaughter in his arms of his son and nephew, for him and them to suffer from thirst rather than submit to what to him appeared to be an unjust order. It is my belief that the rise of Islam has been due not to the sword, but to the self-immolation alone of the *fakereers* of Islam. There is little to boast of in the ability to wield the sword. When the striker finds out his mistake, he understands the sinfulness of his act which now becomes murder and has to repent of his folly. Whereas he who courts death even though he might have done so in error, for him it is still a victory. Passive resistance is the religion of *Ahimsa*. It is therefore everywhere and always a duty and is desirable. Violence is *Himsa* and has been discarded in all religions. Even the devotees of methods of violence impose elaborate restrictions upon their use. Passive resistance admits of no such limits. It is limited only by the insufficiency of the passive resister's strength to suffer.

No one else but a passive resister can answer the question whether his passive resistance is lawful or otherwise. The public can only judge after the passive resister has begun his work. He cannot be deterred by public displeasure. His operations are not founded upon arithmetical formulae. He may be considered a clever politician or a thoughtful man who commences his so-called passive resistance only after having weighed chances of success and failure. But



he is by no means a passive resister. The former acts because he must.

Both soul force and force of arms are from times immemorial. Both have received their due meed of praise in the accepted religious literature. They respectively represent forces of good and evil. The Indian belief is that there was in this land a time when the forces of good were predominant. That state still remains our ideal. Europe furnishes a forcible illustration of predominance of the forces of evil.

Either of these is preferable to rank cowardice. Neither *swaraj* nor an awakening among us is possible without resort to one or the other. *Swaraj* is no *swaraj* which is gained without action. Such *swaraj* could make no impression on the people. No awakening is possible without the people at large realising their power. In spite of protestations by leaders and efforts by the Government, if they and we do not give passive resistance due predominance, methods of violence will automatically gain strength. They are like weeds; they grow anyhow in any soil. For a cultivation of passive resistance endeavour and courage form the necessary manure, and as weeds, if they are not rooted out, overwhelm a crop, even so will violence grow like weeds, if the ground is not kept clean by self-sacrifice for the growth of passive resistance, and violence that may have already taken root be not dealt with by loving hands. By the method of passive resistance we can wean from the error of their ways the youths who have become impatient of and angered by what to them appears to be the Governmental *zoolum*, and we can strengthen the forces of good by enlisting in favour of

passive resistance their heroism, their courage and their power of endurance.

Therefore the sooner the spirit of passive resistance pervades the atmosphere, the better it is. It will bless both the *Raj* and the raiyat. A passive resister never wants to embarrass a Government or anybody else. He does not act thoughtlessly, he is never insolent. He therefore shuns boycott but takes the *swadeshi* vow as a part of his religion and never wavers in practising it. Fearing God alone, he is afraid of no other power. Fear of kings can never make him forsake the path of duty. /

In view of the foregoing, it is hardly necessary for me to say that it is our duty to make use of passive resistance in order to procure the release of Mrs. Besant and her comrades. It is beside the point whether one approves of all or any of her acts. I certainly disapprove of some of her acts. But in my humble opinion, the Government have grievously erred in interning them and it is an act of injustice. I know that the Government think otherwise. It is possible that the public are in error in desiring their release. The Government have acted upon their belief. How are the public to make an effective demonstration of their wounded feelings? Petitions and the like are a remedy for endurable grievances. For the unendurable passive resistance alone is the remedy. Only those who consider the wrong to be unendurable will, when the feeling possesses them, dedicate themselves body and soul to the release of Mrs. Besant. Such self-surrender is the most effective demonstration of a people's desire. And before it the mightiest power must bend. Such is my unalterable faith in the efficacy of soul force.

## VYKOM SATYAGRAHA ---

The following instructions were given by Mahatma Gandhi to the passive resisters at Vykom when he came down in person to see them and encourage them :

This is a struggle deeply religious for the Hindus. We are endeavouring to rid Hinduism of its greatest blot. The prejudice we have to fight against is an agelong prejudice. The struggle for the opening of the roads round the temple (which we hold to be public) to the untouchables is but a small skirmish in the big battle.

If our struggle was to end merely with the opening of the roads in Vykom, you may be sure I would not have bothered my head about it. It is true the road must be opened. It has got to be opened. But that will be the beginning of the end. The end is to get all such roads throughout Travancore opened. Not only that, but we expect that our efforts may result in amelioration of the general condition of the untouchables in every direction.

This will require tremendous sacrifice ; for our aim is not to do things by violence to our opponents. That would only be conversion by compulsion ; and if we import compulsion in matters of religion we shall be committing suicide. We have to carry on this struggle by suffering in our own persons. This is the meaning of soul force. The question is whether you are capable of every suffering that may be imposed upon you in the journey towards the goal.

Even while you are suffering you must have no bitterness—no trace of it—against your opponents. This

is not a mechanical act at all. On the contrary, I want you to feel like loving your opponents; and the way to do it is to give the same credit for honesty of purpose which you would claim for yourself. I know that it is a difficult task. I confess that it was a difficult task for me yesterday whilst I was talking to those friends who insisted on their rights to exclude the untouchables from the temple roads. I confess there was selfishness behind their talk. How then was I to credit them with honesty of purpose? I was thinking of this thing yesterday and also this morning and this is what I did. I asked myself: "Wherein was their selfishness or self-interest? It is true that they have their ends to serve. But so have we our ends to serve. Only we consider our ends to be pure and therefore selfless. But who is to determine where selflessness ends and selfishness begins? Selflessness may even sometimes be the purest form of selfishness."

I do not say this for the sake of argument. But that is what I really feel. I am considering their condition of mind from their point of view and not my own. Immediately we begin to think of things as our opponents think of them, we shall be able to do them full justice. Three-fourths of the miseries and misunderstandings in the world will disappear if we step into the shoes of our adversaries and understand their standpoint. We shall then either agree with our adversaries quickly or else think charitably of them. In our case there is no question of our agreeing with them quickly as our ideals are radically different. But we may be charitable to them and believe that they actually mean what they say.

They do not want to open the roads to the untouchables. Our business is to show them that they are in the wrong and we should do so by our suffering. I have found

that mere appeal to reason does not answer where prejudices are agelong and based on supposed religious authority. Reason has to be strengthened by suffering and suffering opens the eyes of understanding. Therefore there must be no trace of compulsion in our acts. We must not be impatient and we must have an undying faith in the means we are adopting.

If you believe in the efficacy of soul force you will rejoice in this suffering and you will not feel the discomfort of your position as you go and stand in the burning sun from day to day. If you have faith in the cause and in the means, and in God, the hot sun will be cool to you. You must not be tired and say : " How long ? " You must never get irritated. That is only a small portion of your penance for the sin for which Hinduism is responsible.

I know that all this will sound hard and difficult for you. My presentation may be hard, but it has not been possible for me to present the thing in any other way. For it will be wrong on my part if I deceive you, or myself, into believing that this is an easy thing.

Much corruption has crept into our religion. We have become lazy as a nation. Selfishness dominates our action. There is mutual jealousy amongst the tallest of us. We are uncharitable to one another. Soul force is a relentless search for truth and a determination to reach truth. I can only trust you will realize the import of what you are doing. If you do, your path will be easy, because you will take delight in difficulties and will laugh in hope even when everybody is in despair.

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## SATYAGRAHA: THE SOVEREIGN REMEDY

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*Satyagraha*, as we have noticed in recent years, is with some a mere matter of policy while with others is a thing of faith. Mahatma Gandhi finds in it the sovereign remedy for all ills. He concluded his presidential address to the Belgaum Congress in December 1924 with the following affirmation of faith :

As a Congressman wishing to keep the Congress intact, I advise suspension of non-co-operation; for I see that the nation is not ready for it. But as an individual, I cannot, and will not, do so as long as the Government remains what it is. It is not merely policy with me, it is an article of faith. Non-co-operation and civil disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called *Satyagraha*. It is my *kalpadrum*—*Jam-i-Jam*—the Universal Provider. *Satyagraha* is search for Truth; and God is Truth. *Ahimsa* or non-violence is the light that reveal the Truth to me. *Swaraj* for me is part of that Truth. This *Satyagraha* did not fail me in South Africa, Khairatpur, or Champaran and in a host of other cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India. But I combat the attempt with non-violence. I believe in the capacity of India to offer non-violent battle to the English rulers. The experiment has not failed. It has succeeded, but not to the extent we had hoped and desired. I do not despair. On the contrary, I believe that India will come to her own in the near future and that only through *Satyagraha*. The proposed suspension is part of the experiment.

Non-co-operation need never be resumed if the programme sketched by me can be fulfilled. Non-violent non-co-operation in some form or other, whether through the Congress or without it, will be resumed if the programme fails. I have repeatedly stated that *Satyagraha* never fails and that one perfect *Satyagrahi* is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect *Satyagrahis*. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For *Satyagraha* is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in every one of us. Like *Swarcj* it is our birthright. Let us know it.\*

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## SATYAGRAHA IN INDIA

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Mahatma Gandhi has given in a concise form an interesting account of the different Passive Resistance struggles in India which ultimately led up to the All-India Non-Co-operation movement. As it will be seen the first struggle began in 1915 in Kathiawar but step by step at each successive struggle it gained alike in volume and strength till it became immense and country wide. The account is quoted at some length in Mr. C. F. Andrews' very suggestive book on "Mahatma Gandhi's Ideas". Mr. Andrews himself supplies the notes (within brackets) explaining what each struggle was about wherever Mr. Gandhi's words do not make the matter clear.

It was through the instrumentality of Bhai Motilal, the public-spirited and good tailor of Wadhwan that I first became interested in the Viramgam question. I had just arrived from England and was proceeding to Kathiawar in the year 1915. I was travelling third class. At Wadhwan station, Motilal came up to me with a small party. He gave me some account of the hardships inflicted on the people at Viramgam and said :

'Please do something to end this trouble (i.e., the establishment of a new customs barrier between British India and the Kathiawar States). It will be doing an immense service to Kathiawar, the land of your birth.'

There was an expression of both compassion and firmness in his eyes.

'Are you ready to go to jail?' I asked.

'We are ready to march to the gallows,' was the quick reply.

'Jail will do for me,' I said. 'But see that you do not leave me in the lurch.'

'That only time can show,' said Motilal.

I reached Rajkot, obtained detailed information and commenced correspondence with Government. In speeches at different places I dropped a hint that the people should



be ready to offer passive resistance at Viramgam if necessary. These speeches were brought to the notice of Government. In this they served Government and, unintentionally, served the people also. Finally, I had a talk with Lord Chelmsford on the matter. He promised abolition of the Customs barrier and was as good as his word. I know others also tried for this. But I am strongly of opinion that the imminent possibility of Passive Resistance was the chief factor in obtaining the desired redress.

Then came the anti-Indenture struggle (to prevent indentured Indian labour being recruited for the British Colonies). Great efforts were put forth to get indenture repealed. There was a considerable public agitation. The Bombay meeting fixed May 31, 1917, as the date from which onwards indentured labour should be stopped. A deputation of ladies first waited upon the Viceroy in connection with this. I cannot help mentioning here the name of the high-souled sister, Mrs. Jaiji Petit. It was she who may be said to have organized this deputation. Here, too, success came merely through preparedness for *Satyagraha*, or Passive Resistance. But it is important to remember the distinction—that in this case public agitation was also necessary. The stopping of indentured labour was very much more important than the abolition of the Viramgam customs barrier. Lord Chelmsford committed a series of blunders, beginning with the passing of the Rowlatt Act. Still, I think he was a wise ruler. But what Viceroy can escape for long the influence of the permanent officials of the Civil Service?

The third in order came the Champaran struggle (undertaken in order to remedy the evils that had grown up connected with the indigo plantations). Here

*Satyagraha* had actually to be offered. Mere preparedness for it did not suffice as powerful vested interests were arrayed in opposition. The peace maintained by the people of Champaran deserves to be placed on record. I can bear witness to the perfect non-violence of the leaders in thought, word, and deed. Hence it was that this agelong abuse came to an end in six months.

The fourth struggle was that of the mill-hands of Ahmedabad against the mill-owners. Gujarat is perfectly familiar with its history. How peaceful the labourers were! As for the leaders, there can hardly be anything for me to say. Still I hold the victory in this case was not quite pure because the fast I had to observe\* in order to sustain the labourers in their determination exercised indirect pressure upon the mill-owners. The fast was bound to influence them as I enjoyed friendly relations with them. Still, the moral is clear.

The fifth was the Khaira struggle (concerning the over-assessment of the land revenue by the Government in a time of scarcity). I cannot say that in this case all the local leaders of *Satyagraha* adhered to the pure truth. Peace was certainly maintained. The non-violence of the peasantry, however, was only superficial like that of the mill-hands. So we came out of the struggle with bare honour. However, there was a great awakening among the people. But Khaira had not fully grasped the lesson of non-violence; the mill-hands had not understood the true meaning of peace. The people had, therefore, to suffer.

\* When he saw that the mill-labourers were breaking their word and preparing to go back to work without effecting their object, Mr. Gandhi declared that he would go on fasting until the object of the strike was obtained.

The sixth was in connection with the Rowlatt Act. (This Act involved persons who might be innocent being kept in prison without open trial.) Therein our inherent shortcomings came to the surface. But the original foundation was well and truly laid. We admitted all our shortcomings. I had to confess my Himalayan blunder.\* I had also to undertake a fast myself and invite others to do so. The Rowlatt Act was a dead-letter even when it was promulgated, and that Black Act was finally repealed. This struggle taught us a great lesson.

The seventh was the Non-Co-operation struggle in order to right the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and to win *Swaraj*. It is still going on. And my confidence is unshaken that, if a single *Satyagrahi* holds out to the end, victory is absolutely certain.

This is the beauty of *Satyagraha*. It comes up to us; we have not to go out in search for it. There is a virtue inherent in the principle itself. A *dharmayudda* (war of righteousness) in which there are no secrets to be guarded, no scope for cunning, and no place for untruth, comes unsought; and a man of religion is ever ready for it. A struggle which has to be previously planned is not a righteous struggle. In a righteous struggle God Himself plans the campaigns and conducts the battles. A war of righteousness can be waged only in the name of God; and it is only when the *Satyagrahi* feels quite helpless, when he is apparently on his last legs and finds utter darkness all around him, that God comes to the rescue. God helps us when we feel ourselves humbler than the very dust under our feet. Only to the weak and helpless is Divine succour vouchsafed.

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\* He refers to his ignorance that the masses were certain to become violent if left to themselves.

## SALT SATYAGRAHA

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On the eve of the march which initiated the *Satyagraha* campaign of 1930, Mahatma Gandhi declared before a vast gathering on the sands of Sabarmati:

I have faith in the righteousness of our cause and the purity of our weapons. And where the means are clean, there God is undoubtedly present with His blessings. And where these three combine, there defeat is an impossibility. A *Satyagrahi*, whether free or incarcerated, is ever victorious. He is vanquished only when he forsakes truth and non-violence and turns a deaf ear to the Inner Voice. If, therefore, there is such a thing as defeat for even a *Satyagrahi*, he alone is the cause of it. God bless you all and keep off all obstacles from the path in the struggle that begins to-morrow. Let this be our prayer.

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## RULES FOR A SATYAGRAHI

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Though civil resistance was organised on a nation wide basis during the Salt *Satyagraha* of 1930, it should be noted that it was almost everywhere led by a compact, well disciplined and highly organised army of volunteers. For their guidance, the following rules were laid down and for the most part implicitly obeyed:

### AS AN INDIVIDUAL

1. A *Satyagrahi*, i.e., a civil resister, will harbour no anger.

2. He will suffer the anger of the opponent.

3. In so doing he will put up with assaults from the opponent and never retaliate; but he will not submit out of fear of punishment or the like to any order given in anger.

4. When any person in authority seeks to arrest a civil resister, he will voluntarily submit to the arrest and he will not resist the attachment or removal of his own property, if any, when it is sought to be confiscated by the authorities.

5. If a civil resister has any property in his possession as a trustee, he will refuse to surrender it even though in defending it he might lose his life. He will however never retaliate.

6. Non-retaliation excludes swearing and cursing.

7. Therefore a civil resister will never insult his opponent, and therefore also not take part in many of the newly coined cries which are contrary to the spirit of *ahimsa*.

8. A civil resister will not salute the Union Jack, nor will he insult it or officials, English or Indian.

9. In the course of the struggle if any one insults an official, or commits an assault upon him, a civil resister will protect such official or officials from the insult or attack even at the risk of his life.

AS A PRISONER

10. As a prisoner, a civil resister will behave courteously toward prison officials and will observe all such discipline of the prison as is not contrary to self-respect; as, for instance, whilst he will *salaam* officials in the usual manner, he will not perform any humiliating gyrations and he will refuse to shout "Victory to *Sarkar*" or the like. He will take cleanly cooked and cleanly served food which is not contrary to his religion and will refuse to take food insultingly served or served in unclean vessels.

11. A civil resister will make no distinction between an ordinary prisoner and himself, will in no way regard himself superior to the rest, nor will he ask for any conveniences that may not be necessary for keeping his body in good health and condition. He is entitled to ask for such conveniences as may be required for his physical or spiritual well-being.

12. A civil resister may not fast for want of conveniences whose deprivation does not involve any injury to his self-respect.

AS A UNIT

13. A civil resister will joyfully obey all the orders issued by the leader of the corps, whether they please him or not.

14. He will carry out orders in the first instance even though they appear to him insulting, inimical, or foolish, and then appeal to higher authority. He is free before joining, to determine the fitness of the corps to

satisfy him, but after he has joined it, it becomes a duty to submit to its discipline, irksome or otherwise. If the sum-total of the energy of the corps appears to a member to be improper or immoral, he has a right to sever his connection but being within it, he has no right to commit a breach of its discipline.

15. No civil resister is to expect maintenance for his dependents. It would be an accident if any such provision is made. A civil resister entrusts his dependents to the care of God. Even in ordinary warfare wherein hundreds and thousands give themselves up to it, they are able to make no previous provision. How much more, then, should such be the case in *Satyagraha*. It is the universal experience that in such times hardly anybody is left to starve.

#### IN COMMUNAL FIGHTS

16. No civil resister will intentionally become a cause of communal quarrels.

17. In the event of any such outbreak, he will not take sides, but he will assist only that party which is demonstrably in the right. Being a Hindu he will be generous towards Mussalmans and others and will sacrifice himself in the attempt to save non-Hindus from a Hindu attack. And if the attack is from the other side, he will not participate in any retaliation but will give his life in protecting Hindus.

18. He will, to the best of his ability, avoid every occasion that may give rise to communal quarrels.

19. If there is a procession of *Satyagrahis*, they will do nothing that would wound the religious susceptibilities of any community, and they will not take part in any other processions that are likely to wound such susceptibilities.

# JAIL EXPERIENCES IN SOUTH AFRICA

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These prison experiences were originally written by Mr. Gandhi in Gujarati and we are indebted to the *Modern Review* for the following English version :

## I

### FIRST JAIL EXPERIENCE

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#### INSPECTION

When the different inspectors come to inspect, all the prisoners have to post themselves in a row and take off their caps to salute them. As all of us had English caps, there was no difficulty in observing this rule. It was both legal and proper that we should take off our caps. The words of direction used were "fall in". These words had, so to speak, become our food as we had to "fall in" four or five times a day. One of these officers, an assistant to the Chief Warder, was a little stiff-necked and so the Indians had nicknamed him "General Smuts". Generally he was the first to come in the mornings and again in the evenings. At half past nine the Doctor came. He was very good and kind and unfailing in his inquiries. Each prisoner had, according to jail rules, to show all parts of his body on the first day to the Doctor, stripping himself bare of all clothes, but he was kind enough not to enforce the same in our case. When many more Indians had come, he simply told us to report to him if any one had got itches, etc., so that he might examine him *in camera*. At half past ten or



eleven, the Governor and Chief Warder came. The former was a firm, just and quiet natured officer. His invariable inquiries were whether we were all right, whether we wanted anything, whether we had any complaints to make. Whenever we had any such, he heard them attentively and gave us relief if he could. Some of these complaints and grievances I shall refer to later on. His deputy came also at times. He was kind hearted too. But the best of them all was our Chief Warder. Himself deeply religious, he was not only kind and courteous towards us but every prisoner sang his praises in no measured terms. He was attentive in preserving to the prisoners all their rights, he overlooked their trivial faults, and knowing in our case that we were all innocent he was particularly kind to us, and to show his kindness he often came and talked to us.

#### INCREASE IN OUR NUMBERS

I have said before that there were only five of us passive resisters at first. On 14th January, Tuesday, came in Mr. Thambi Naidu, the Chief Picket, and Mr. Koin, the President of the Chinese Association. We all were pleased to receive them. On the 18th, fourteen others joined us including Samundar Khan. He was in for two months. The rest were Madrasis, Kunamias and Gujarati Hindus. They were arrested for hawking without licences and sentenced to pay a fine of £2 and in default, to 14 days' imprisonment. They had bravely elected to go to jail. On the 21st 76 others came. In this batch only Nawab Khan had two months, the rest were with a fine of £2, or in default, 14 days' imprisonment. Most of them were Gujarati Hindus, some Kunamias and some Madrasis. On the 22nd 35, on the 23rd 3, on the 24th 1, on the 25th 2, on the 28th 6, and in the

evening 4 more, and on the 29th 4 Kunamias added to our numbers. So that by the 29th there were 155 passive resisters incarcerated. On the 30th I was removed to Pretoria, but I knew that on that day 5 or 6 others had come in.

#### FOOD

The question of food is of great moment to many of us in all circumstances, but to those in prison it is of the greatest importance. They are greatly in need of good food. The rule is that a prisoner had to rest content with jail food, he cannot procure any from outside. The same is the case with a soldier who has to submit to his regulation rations, but the difference between the two is, that his friends can send other food to the soldier and he can take it, while a prisoner is prohibited from doing so. So that this prohibition about food is one of the signs of being in prison. Even in general conversation, you will find the jail officers saying that there could be no exercise of taste about prison diet and no such article could be allowed therein. In a talk with the prison medical officer, I told him that it was necessary for us to have some tea, or ghee or some such thing along with bread, and he said, you want to eat with taste and no palatable thing could be allowed in a prison.

According to the regulations, in the first week an Indian gets in the morning 12 oz. of mealie pap without sugar or ghee; at noon 4 oz. of rice and one oz. of ghee; in the evening for 5 days 12 oz. of mealie pap; for 3 days 12 oz. of boiled beans and salt. This scale has been modelled on the dietary of the Kaffirs—the only difference being that in the evening, the Kaffirs are given crushed maize corn and lard or fat, while the Indians get rice. In the second week and thenceforward

for two days boiled potatoes, and for two days cabbages or pumpkin or some such vegetable is given along with maize flour. Those who take meat are given meat with vegetables on Sundays.

The first batch of prisoners had resolved to solicit for no favours at the hands of Government and to take whatever food was served out if not religiously objectionable. Really speaking the above was not a proper kind of diet for Indians, though medically of course it contained sufficient nutrition. Maize is the daily food of the Kaffirs, so this diet suits them nay they thrive on it in jail. But Indians rarely use maize-flour, rice only suits them. We are not used to eat beans alone, nor could we like vegetables as cooked by or for Kaffirs. They never clean the vegetable nor season them with any spices. Again, the vegetable cooked for the Kaffirs mostly consist of the peelings left after the same have been prepared for the European convicts. For spices, nothing else besides salt is given. Sugar is never dreamt of. Thus, the food question was a very difficult one for us all. Still as we had determined that the passive resisters were neither to solicit nor ask for favours from the jail authorities, we tried to rest content with this kind of food.

In reply to his inquiries we had told the Governor that the food did not suit us, but we were determined not to ask for any favours from Government. If Government of its own accord wanted to make a change, it would be welcome, else we would go on taking the regulation diet.

But this determination could not last long. When others joined us, we thought it would be improper to make them share this trouble with us also. Was it not sufficient that they had shared the prison with us? So we began to

talk to the Governor on their behalf. We told him we were prepared to take any kind of food, but the later batches could not do so. He thought over the matter and said that he would allow them to cook separately if they put it on the ground of religion, but the articles of food would be the same ; it did not rest with him to make any changes in them.

In the meantime fourteen others had joined us and some of them elected to starve rather than take mealie pap. So I read the jail rules and found out that applications in such matters should be made to the Director of Prisons. I asked therefore the Governor to be permitted to apply to him and sent a petition accordingly :

We, the undersigned prisoners, beg to state that we are all Asiatics, 18 Indians and 3 Chinese.

The 18 Indians get for their breakfast mealie pap and the others rice and ghee; they get beans thrice and "pap" four times. We were given potatoes on Saturdays and greens on Sundays. On religious grounds we cannot eat meat; some are entirely prohibited from taking it and others cannot do so because of its not being religiously slaughtered.

The Chinese get maize-corn instead of rice. All the prisoners are mostly used to European food and they also eat bread and other flour preparations. None of us is used to mealie pap and some of us suffer from indigestion.

Seven of us have eaten no breakfast at all; only at times when the Chinese prisoners who got bread, out of mercy gave them a piece or two out of their rations, have we eaten the same. When this was mentioned to the Governor, he said we were guilty of a jail offence in thus accepting bread.

In our opinion this kind of food is entirely unsuitable to us. So we have to apply that we should be given food according to the rules for European prisoners and mealie pap be left out entirely; or, in the alternative, such food should be given as would support us and be in consonance with our habits and customs.

This is an urgent matter and a reply be sent by wire.

Twenty-one of us had signed the petition and while it was being despatched seventy-six more came in. They also had a dislike for the "pap", and so we added a

paragraph stating that the new arrivals also objected to the diet. I requested the Governor to send it by wire. He asked his superior's permission by telephone and allowed at once 4 oz. of bread in place of "pap". We were all very pleased, and from the 22nd 4 oz. of bread was substituted in place of pap, morning and evening. In the evening we got 8.oz., i.e., half a loaf. But this was merely a temporary arrangement. A committee was sitting on the question and we heard that they had recommended an allowance of flour, ghee and pulse; but before it could take effect, we had been released and so nothing more happened.

In the beginning when there was only eight of us we did not cook ourselves, so we used to get uncooked rice and ill-cooked vegetables whenever the same were given, so we obtained permission to cook for ourselves. On the first day, Mr. Kadva cooked. After that Mr. Thambi Naidu and Mr. Jivan both took up the function, and in our last days they had to cook for about 150 men. They had to cook once only, excepting on vegetable days which were two in a week when they had to do so twice. Mr. Naidu took great trouble over this. I used to distribute.

From the style of the petition, the reader must have noted the fact that it was presented on behalf of all Indian prisoners and not us (eight) alone. We talked with the Governor also on the same lines and he had promised to look into it for all the Asiatic prisoners. We still hope that the jail diet of the Indians would be improved.

Again, the three Chinese used to get other articles instead of rice and hence annoyance was felt, as there was an appearance of their being considered separate from and inferior to us. For this reason I applied on

their behalf to the Governor and to Mr. Playford, and it was ordered that they should be placed on the same level as Indians.

It is instructive to compare this dietary with that of the Europeans. They get for their morning breakfast "pap" and 8 oz. of bread; for the midday meal, bread and soup, or bread and meat, or bread and meat and potatoes or vegetables; and in the evenings bread and "pap". Thus they got bread thrice in the day and so they do not care whether they have the "pap" or not. Again they get meat or soup in addition. Besides this they are often given tea or cocoa. This will show that both the Europeans and the native Kaffirs get food suitable to them, and it is the poor Indians alone who suffer. They had no special dietary of their own. If they were treated like Europeans in food, they the Europeans would have felt ashamed and no one had the concern to find out what was the food of the Indian. They had thus to be ranked with the Kaffirs and silently starve. For this state of circumstances I find fault with our own people the passive resisters. Some Indians got the requisite food by stealth, others put up with whatever they got and were either ashamed to make public the story of their distress or had no thought for others. Hence the outside public remained in the dark. If we were to follow truth and agitate where we got injustice, there would be no room to undergo such inconveniences. If we were to leave self and apply ourselves to the good of others, grievances would get remedied soon. But just as it is necessary to take steps for the redress of such complaints, so it is necessary to think of certain other things also. It is but meet for prisoners to undergo certain inconveniences. If there be no trouble, what is the good of being

called a prisoner? Those who are the masters of their minds, take pleasure even in suffering and live happily in jails. They do not lose sight of the existence of the suffering, and they should not do so considering that there are others also suffering with them.

There is another evil habit of ours and that is our tenacity in sticking to our manners and customs. We must do in Rome as the Romans do. We are living in South Africa and we must accustom ourselves to what is considered good food here. "Mealie pap" is a food as good, simple and cheap as our wheat. We cannot say it is without taste, sometimes it beats wheat even. It is my belief that out of respect for the country of our adoption, we must take food which grows in that country if it be not unwholesome. Many "Whites" like this "pap" and eat it in the morning. It becomes palatable if milk or sugar or even ghee be taken with it. For these reasons and for the fact that we might have to go to jail again in the future, it is advisable for every Indian to accustom himself to this preparation of maize. With this habit even when the time comes to take it merely with salt, we would not find it hard to do so. It is incumbent on us to leave off some of our habits for the good of our country. All those nations that have advanced have given up these things where there was nothing substantial to lose. The Salvation Army people attract the natives of the soil by adopting their customs, dress, etc., if not particularly objectionable.

#### SICKNESS

It would have been a miracle had no one out of 150 prisoners fallen ill. The first to be taken ill was Mr. Samundar Khan. He had been brought into jail ailing and was taken to hospital the next day. Mr. Kadva

was a victim to rheumatism and for some days he did not mind being treated by the Doctor in the prison cell itself, but eventually he had to go to the hospital too. Two others suffered from fainting fits and were taken there. The reason was, that it was very hot then and the convicts had to remain out in the sun the whole day and so they fell down in fits. We nursed them as best we could. Later on, Mr. Nawab Khan also succumbed and on the day of our release he had to be led out by hand. He had improved a little after the Doctor had ordered milk, etc., to be given to him. On the whole, still, it may be safely said that the passive resisters fared well.

#### PAUCITY OF SPACE

I have stated already that our cell had space enough to accommodate only fifty-one prisoners, and the same holds good with regard to the area. Later on, when instead of 51 there were 151 souls to be accommodated, great difficulty was felt. The Governor had to pitch tents outside and many had to go there. During our last days, about a hundred had to be taken out to sleep and back again in the morning. The area space was too small for this number and we could pass our time there with great difficulty. Added to this was our evil inborn habit of spitting everywhere which rendered the place dirty and there was the danger of disease breaking out. Fortunately, our companions were amenable to advice and assisted us in keeping the compound clean. Scrupulous care was exercised in inspecting the area and privies and this saved the inmates from disease. Every one will admit that the Government was at fault in incarcerating such a large number in so narrow a space. If the room was insufficient, it was incumbent on the



Government not to send so many there, and if the struggle had been prolonged, it would not have been possible for the Government to commit any more to this prison.

#### READING

I have already mentioned that the Governor had allowed us the use of a table with pen, ink, etc. We had the free run of the prison library also. I had taken from there the works of Carlyle and the Bible. From the Chinese interpreter who used to come there, I had borrowed the Kuran-e-Sharif translated into English, speeches of Huxley, Carlyle's Lives of Burns, Johnson and Scott, and Bacon's Essays. Of my own I had taken the Bhagvad Gita with Manilal Nathubhai's annotations, several Tamil works, an Urdu book from the Moulvi Sahib, the writings of Tolstoy, Ruskin and Socrates. Many of these I read or re-read in the jail. I used to study Tamil regularly. In the morning I used to read the Gita and at noon mostly the Koran. In the evening I taught the Bible to Mr. Foretoon who was a Chinese Christian. He wanted to learn English and I taught it to him through the Bible.

If I had been permitted to spend out my full period, I would have been able to complete my translations of a book each of Carlyle and Ruskin. I believe that as I was fully occupied in the study of the above works, I would not have become tired even if I had got more than two months; not only that but I would have added usefully to my knowledge and studies. I would have passed a happy life believing as I do that whoever has a taste for reading good books, is able to bear loneliness in any place with great ease.

## RELIGIOUS STUDY

In the West we now see that as a matter of fact the State looks after the religion of all its prisoners and hence we find a Church in the Johannesburg prison for its inmates, but it is provided to meet only the needs of the Whites, who alone are allowed access thereto. I asked for special permission for Mr. Foretoon and myself, but the Governor told me it was only for White Christian prisoners. Every Sunday they attend it, and preachers of different denominations give them religious lessons there. •

Several missionaries come in to convert the Kaffirs also with special permission. There is no Church for them; they sit in the open. Jews also have got their preachers to look after them. It is only the Hindus and Mahomedans who are spiritually left unprovided for. There are not many Indian prisoners, it is true, but the absence of any such provision for them is hardly creditable to them. The leaders of both communities should therefore lay their heads together and arrange for the religious instruction of the members of their community in jail even if there be only one convict. The preachers, whether Hindus or Maulvis, should be pure hearted and they should be careful not to become thorns in the sides of the convicts.

## THE END

All that was worth knowing has been stated above. Indians being placed on a level with the Kaffirs is a fact which calls for further consideration. While the White convicts get a bedstead to sleep on, a tooth-brush to clean their teeth, a towel to wipe their faces and hands and also a handkerchief, Indians get nothing. Why this distinction?

We should never think that this is not a matter for our

interference. It is these little things which either enhance our respect or degrade us. An Arabic book says that he who has no self-respect has no religion. Nations have become great by gradually enhancing their self-respect. Self-respect does not mean vanity or rashness, but a state of mind which is prepared not to let go its privileges simply out of fear or idleness. One who has really his trust in God attains to self-respect, and I firmly believe that one who has no trust in Him, never knows what is right, nor does he know how to do right.

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## II

### SECOND JAIL EXPERIENCE

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Every prisoner in the jail on getting up in the morning is required to fold his own bedding and to place it in its proper place. He must finish his toilet by 6 o'clock and be ready to start out at the stroke of the hour. The work begins at 7 o'clock. It is of various kinds. The ground to be dug was very hard. It was to be worked upon with spades and hence the work proved too hard. Again, it was a very hot day. The place we were taken to was about a mile and a half from the jail. Each one of us started very well indeed. But as none of us was used to this kind of work, it was not long before we were quite done up. As the day advanced, the work seemed harder still. The warder was very strict. He used to cry out every now and then: "Go on, go on." This made the Indians quite nervous. I saw some of them weeping. One of them had a swollen foot. All this caused me a great deal of heart-burning, and yet on every occasion I reminded them of the duty and asked them to perform it as well as possible with a good heart and without minding the words of the warder; I felt myself done up also. My hands were covered with blisters and water was oozing out of them. I could hardly bend the spade and felt the weight of it as if it was quite a maund. I prayed to God to preserve my honour, to maintain my limbs intact and to bestow on me sufficient strength to be able to perform my allotted task. I trusted to Him and went on with my work.

The warder would sometimes remonstrate with me at an occasional break required to get over the fatigue. I told him that it was unnecessary for him to remind me of my duty and that I was prepared to go through as much of it as was possible for me to do. Just then I saw Mr. Jhinabbhai faint. . . . While I was pouring water on Jhinabbhai's head, the following occurred to me. Most of the Indians trusted my word and submitted themselves to imprisonment. If the advice that I happened to offer them were erroneous, how much sin I would be committing in the eyes of God in tendering it to them. They underwent all sorts of hardships on account of that advice. With this thought in my mind, I heaved a deep sigh. With God as my witness, I reflected on the subject once more and was immediately reassured that it was all right. I felt that the advice that I tendered to them was the only advice that I could under the circumstances. In anticipation of future happiness, it was absolutely necessary that we should undergo the hardest trials and sufferings in the first instance and that there was no reason to be grieved at the latter. This was simply a fit of fainting, but even if it was a case of death, how could I offer any other advice than what I had already done? It at once occurred to me that it was more honourable for anybody to die suffering in that manner than to continue living a life of perpetual enslavement.

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At one time one of the warders came to me and asked me to provide him with two of his men to clean the water-closets. I thought that I could do nothing better than clean them myself and so I offered him my services. I have no particular dislike to that kind of work. On the

contrary I am of opinion that we ought to get ourselves accustomed to it.

I was given a bed in a ward where there were principally Kaffir patients. Here I passed the whole night in great misery and terror. I did not know then that I was to be taken the next day to another cell that was occupied by Indian prisoners. Fretting that I would be kept incarcerated with such men, I got very nervous and terror-stricken. And yet I tried my best to reconcile myself to the idea that it was my duty to undergo the sufferings that may<sup>\*</sup> befall me. I read from the Bhagwad Gita that I had with me certain verses suited to the occasion and on pondering over them was soon reconciled to the situation. The chief reason why I got nervous was that in the same room there were a number of wild, murderous looking, vicious Kaffir and Chinese prisoners. I did not know their language. One of the Kaffirs began to ply me with all sorts of questions. As far as I could gather, he seemed to be mocking me indecently. I did not understand what his questions were and I kept quiet. He then asked me in his broken English: "Why have they brought you here?" I gave him a very short reply and was again silent. He was followed by one of the Chinamen. He was worse than the other. He approached my bed and looked at me intently. I kept on my silence. He then proceeded, towards the above-mentioned Kaffir's bed. There they began to mock each other indecently and expose their private parts. Both these prisoners were probably there for murder or highway robbery. How could I enjoy sleep after seeing these dreadful things?

At one time as soon as I got seated at the water-closet there to answer the call of nature, a very wild and

muscular looking Kaffir turned up. He asked me to get off from the seat and began to abuse me. I told him I would not be long when he took hold of me and threw me outside. Fortunately, I was able to catch hold of one of the doors and to save myself from a nasty fall. This did not make me very nervous. I simply walked away with a smiling countenance. But one or two Indian prisoners who happened to see the situation in which I was placed, could not restrain themselves from shedding tears.

#### SOME INCONVENIENCES

I marked this also that some of our internal troubles were more painful than the external ones. At times I could see a faint echo of the differences between one being a Hindu and another a Mohammedan, between one belonging to the upper and another to the lower classes. As Indians of all kinds and classes were made to live together in the jail, I could very easily see how and why we were unfit for self-Government. Still as we were able to negotiate all such difficulties in the end successfully I also felt that it was not impossible, if there was the occasion, to govern ourselves successfully too.

Some Hindus said that they would not eat food cooked by Mohammedans or persons of other castes. My opinion is that men with such restrictions should never move out of India. These very objectors had no objection to a Kaffir or a white touching their grain, but once one of them said that the other was a *Dhed*, he would not sleep near him. This was not proper and on inquiry I learnt that he personally had no objection to sleeping in this way, but he was afraid of being placed out of his caste if his caste men in his native place came to learn it. My own idea is that we have embraced untruth and left off truth,

by this show of superiority and inferiority and by the fear of caste. If we know it as a fact that to despise a *Dhed* because he is a *Dhed* is not proper, what right have we to pass ourselves off as conscientious objectors or passive resisters if we leave off the path of truth for fear of caste or some such dread? I therefore wish that those who have joined me in this fight should fight against their caste, against their families, and against everything wherein they see untruth and irreligion. As they are backward in such fights they are backward in this fight too. How would it be possible for us to ask successfully for rights of equality if we, amongst ourselves, stick to such false distinctions or be carried away by the dread of what we consider rightful conduct, coming to be known in our native place as something against caste rules? To give up a cause out of fear is cowardly, and if Indians are cowardly they will not be able to stand up till the end in their struggle against Government.

#### WHO CAN GO TO JAIL?

From the above it will be seen that those who are addicted to bad habits (smoking, etc.), those who stick to false distinctions of caste, those who are quarrelsome, those who see difference between a Hindu and a Mohammedan, and those who are ill, are not proper persons to go to jail, or having gone likely to remain there long. Those who consider it a distinction to go to prison out of patriotism should be sound in body, mind and soul. A sick man might give in, in the long run, and others such as those who are in the habit of being mad after tea, tobacco, etc., cannot fight till the last.

#### MY STUDIES

Although I had to work the whole day, I could spare some time in the mornings and evenings and on Sundays



to read, and as there were no distractions in the jail, I was able to read peacefully. Although the time at my disposal was not much, I read the two famous books of Ruskin, Essays of Thoreau, some part of the Bible, Life of Garribaldi (Gujarati), Essays of Bacon (Gujarati), and two other books in English relating to India. From Thoreau and Ruskin I could find out arguments in favour of our fight. Mr. Devari had sent the Gujarati books for the use of us all. In addition I almost always read the Bhagavad Gita and the result of this study was that my mind became more than ever confirmed in this fight for conscience and make me say emphatically to-day that I saw nothing in prison to make me afraid or tired of it.

#### THE RATIONALE OF SUFFERING

The one view is why one should go to jail and there submit himself to all personal restraints, a place where he would have to dress himself in the coarse and ugly prison garb of a felon and to live upon non-nutritious and semi-starvation diet, where he is sometimes kicked about by jail officials and made to do every kind of work whether he liked it or not, where he has to carry out the behests of a warder who is no better than his household servant, where he is not allowed to receive the visits of his friends and relatives and is prohibited from writing to them, where he is denied almost the bare necessities of life and is sometimes obliged to sleep in the same cell that is occupied by actual thieves and robbers. The question is why one should undergo such trials and sufferings. Better is death than life under such conditions. Far better to pay up the fine than to be thus incarcerated. May God spare His creatures from such sufferings in jail! Such thoughts make one really a coward, and being in constant dread of a jail life, deter him from undertaking

to perform services in the interests of his country which might otherwise prove very valuable.

The other view is that it would be the height of one's good fortune to be in jail in the interests and good name of one's country and religion. There, there is very little of that misery which he has usually to undergo in daily life. There, he has to carry out the orders of one warder only, whereas in daily life he is obliged to carry out the behests of a great many more. In the jail, he has no anxiety to earn his daily bread and to prepare his meals. The Government sees to all that. It also looks after his health for which he has to pay nothing. He gets enough works to exercise his body. He is freed from all his vicious habits. His soul is thus free. He has plenty of time at his disposal to pray to God. His body is restrained, but not his soul. He learns to be more regular in his habits. Those who keep his body in restraint, look after it. Taking this view of jail life, he feels himself quite a free being. If any misfortune comes to him or any wicked warder happens to use any violence towards him, he learns to appreciate and exercise patience and is pleased to have an opportunity of keeping control over himself. Those who think this way are sure to be convinced that even jail life can be attended with blessings. It solely rests with individuals and their mental attitude to make it one of blessing or otherwise. I trust, however, that the readers of this my second experience of life in the Transvaal jail will be convinced that the real road to ultimate happiness lies in going to jail and undergoing sufferings and privations there in the interest of one's country and religion.

Placed in a similar position for refusing his poll-tax, the American citizen, Thoreau, expressed similar thoughts

in 1849. Seeing the walls of the cell in which he was confined, made of solid stone two or three feet thick and the door of wood and iron a foot thick, he said to himself thus :

I saw that, if there was a wall of stone between me and my townsmen, there was a still more difficult one to climb or break through before they could get to be as free as I was. I did not feel for a moment confined, and the walls seemed a great waste of stone and mortar. I felt as if I alone of all my townsmen had paid my tax. They plainly did not know how to treat me, but behaved like persons who are underbred. In every threat and in every compliment there was a blunder; for they thought that my chief desire was to stand the other side of the stone-wall. I could not but smile to see how industriously they locked the door on my meditations which followed them out again without let or hindrance, and they were nearly all that was dangerous. As they could not reach me, they had resolved to punish my body; just as boys if they cannot come to some person against whom they have a spite, will abuse his dog. I saw that the State was half-witted, that it was timid as a lone woman with her silver spoons, and that it did not know its friends from its foes, and I lost all my remaining respect for it and pitied it.

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### III

#### THIRD JAIL EXPERIENCE

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When on the 25th February I got 'three months' hard labour and once again embraced my brother Indians and my son in the Volksrust Jail, I little thought that I should have had to say much in connection with my third "pilgrimage" to the jail, but with many other human assumptions this too proved to be false. My experience this time was unique, and what I learnt therefrom I could not have learnt after years of study. I consider these three months invaluable. I saw many vivid pictures of passive resistance, and I have become therefore a more confirmed resister than what I was three months ago. For all this I have to thank the Government of this place (the Transvaal).

Several officers had betted this that I should not get less than six months. My friends—old and renowned Indians—my own son—had got six months and so I too was wishing that they might win their bets. Still I had my own misgivings and they proved true. I got only three months, that being the maximum under the law.

After going there, I was glad to meet Messrs. Dawood Muhammad, Rustamji, Sorabji, Pillay, Hajura Sing, Lal Bahadur Sing and other "fighters". Excepting about ten, all others were accommodated in tents pitched in the jail compound for sleeping, and the scene resembled a camp more than a prison. Every one liked to sleep in the tents.

We were comfortable about our meals. We used to cook ourselves as before and so could cook as we liked. We were about 77 passive resisters in all.

Those who were taken out for work had rather a hard time of it. The road near the Magistrate's Court had to be built, so they had to dig up stones, etc. and carry them. After that was finished they were asked to dig up grass from the school compound. But mostly they did their work cheerfully. For three days I was also thus sent out with the "shans" (gangs) to work, but in the meanwhile a wire was received that I was not to be taken outside to work. I was disheartened at this as I liked to move out, because it improved my health and exercised my body. Generally I take two meals a day, but in the Volksrust jail, on account of this exercise I felt hungry thrice. After this turn, I was given the work of a sweeper, but this was useless and after a time even that was taken away.

#### WHY I WAS MADE TO LEAVE VOLKSRUST ?

On the 2nd of March I heard that I was ordered to be sent to Pretoria. I was asked to be ready at once, and my warder and I had to go to the station in pelting rain, walking on hard roads with my luggage on my head. We left by the evening train in a third class carriage.

My removal gave rise to various surmises. Some thought that peace was near, others that after separating me from my companions, Government intended to oppress me more, and some others that in order to stifle discussion in the House of Commons it might be intended to give me greater liberty and convenience.

I did not like to leave Volksrust as we passed our days and nights pleasantly there talking to one

another. Messrs. Hajura Sing and Joshi always put us questions—questions which were neither useless nor trivial as they related to science and philosophy. How would one like to leave such company and such a camp?

But if everything happened as we wished, we should not be called human beings. So I left the place quietly. Saluting Mr. Kaji on the road, the warder and I got confined in a compartment. It was very cold and raining too for the whole night. I had my overcoat with me which I was permitted to use. I was given bread and cheese for my meals on the way but as I had eaten before I left, I gave them to my warder.

#### PRETORIA JAIL, THE BEGINNING

We reached Pretoria on the 3rd and found everything new. The jail was newly built and the men were new. I was asked to eat but I had no inclination to do so. Mealie meal porridge was placed before me. I tasted a spoonful only and then left it untouched. My warder was surprised at it, but I told him I was not hungry and he smiled. Then I was handed over to another warder. He said: "Gandhi, take off your cap." I did so. Then he asked: "Are you the son of Gandhi?" I said: "No, my son is undergoing six months' imprisonment at Volksrust." He then confined me in a cell. I began to walk forwards and backwards in it. He saw it from the watch-hole in the door and exclaimed: "Gandhi, don't walk about like that. It spoils my floor." I stopped and stood in a corner quietly. I had nothing to read even, as I had not yet got my books. I was confined at about eight, and at ten I was taken to the Doctor. He only asked me if I had any contagious disease and then allowed me to go. I was then interned in a small room at eleven where I passed my whole time. It seemed to

be a cell made for one prisoner only. Its dimensions were about 10×7 feet. The floor was of black pitch which the warder tried to keep shining. There was only one small glass window barred with iron bars for light and air. There was electric light kept to examine the inmates at night. It was not meant for the use of the prisoners, as it was not strong enough to enable one to read. When I went and stood very near it, I could read only a large-type book. It is put out at eight, but is again put on five or six times during the night to enable the warders to look over the prisoners through the watch-holes.

After eleven, the Deputy-Governor came and I made these requests to him: for my books, for permission to write a letter to my wife who was ill and for a small bench to sit on. For the first, he said he would consider; for the second, I might write; and for the third, no. Afterwards I wrote out my letter in Gujarati and gave it to be posted. He endorsed on it that I should write it in English. I said my wife did not know English and my letters were a great source of comfort to her and that I had nothing special to write in them. Still I did not get the permission, and I declined to write in English. My books were given to me in the evening.

My mid-day meal I had to take standing in my cell with closed doors. At three, I asked leave for a bath. The warder said: "All right, but you had better go there after undressing yourself." The place was 125 feet distant from my cell. I said: If there was no special object in my doing so, I would put my clothes on the curtain there and take my bath. He allowed it, but said: "Do not delay." Even before I had cleaned my body, he shouted out: "Gandhi, have you done?" I said: "

would do so in a minute." I could rarely see the face of an Indian. In the evening I got a blanket and a coir mat to sleep on but neither pillow nor plank. Even when answering a call of nature, I was being watched by a warder. If he did not happen to know me, he would cry out: "Sam, come out." But Sam had got the bad habit of taking his full time in such a condition, so how could he get up at once? If he were to do so, he would not be easy. Sometimes the warders and sometimes the Kaffirs would peep in and at times would sing out: "Get up." The labour given to me next day was to polish the floor and the doors. The latter were of varnished iron, and what polish could be brought on them by rubbing? I spent three hours on each door rubbing, but found them unchanged, the same as before.

## FOOD

The food was in keeping with the above conditions.

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I knew that no ghee was given with rice in the evening, and I had thought of remedying the defect. I spoke to the Chief Warder but he said ghee was to be given only on Wednesdays and Sundays in place of meat, and if its further supply were needed, I should see the Doctor. Next day I applied to see him and I was taken to him.

I requested him to order out for all Indians ghee in place of fat. The Chief Warder was present and he added that "Gandhi's request was not proper. Till then many Indians had used both fat and meat, and that those who objected to fat, were given dry rice which they ate without any objection; that the passive resisters had also done so and when they were released, they left with added weight". The Doctor asked me what I had to say



to that. I replied that I could not quite swallow the story, but speaking for myself, I should spoil my health if I were compelled to take rice without ghee. Then he said: "For you specially I would order bread to be given." I said: "Thank you, but I had not applied for myself alone and I would not be able to take bread for myself alone till ghee was ordered to be given to all others." The Doctor said: "Then you should not find fault with me now."

I again petitioned and I came to learn that the food regulations would ultimately be made as in Natal. I criticised that also and gave the reasons why I could not for myself alone accept ghee. At last when in all about a month and a half had elapsed, I got a reply stating that wherever there were many Indian prisoners, ghee would invariably be given. Thus it might be said that after a month and a half I broke my fast and for the last month I was able to take rice, ghee and bread. But I took no breakfast and at noon, when pap was doled out, I hardly took ten spoonfuls as every day it was differently prepared. But still I got good nourishment from the bread and rice, and so my health improved. I say so because when I used to eat once only, it had broken down, I had lost all strength, and for ten days I was suffering from a severe ache in half of my forehead. My chest too bad shewn symptoms of being affected.

I had told many passive resisters that if they left jail with spoiled health, they would be considered wanting in the right spirit. We must turn our prisons into palaces so that when I found my own health getting ruined, I felt apprehensive lest I should have to go out for that reason. It has to be remembered that I had not availed myself of the order for ghee made in my favour so that

there was a chance of my health getting affected, but this does not apply in the case of others as it is open to each individual prisoner, when he is in jail, to have some special order made in his favour and thus preserve his health.

#### OTHER CHANGES

I have said that my warder was harsh in his dealings with me. But this did not last long. When he saw that I was fighting with the Government about food, etc., but obeying his orders unreservedly, he changed his conduct and allowed me to do as I liked. This removed my difficulties about bath, latrine, etc. He became so considerate that he scarcely allowed it to be seen that he ordered me to do anything. The man who succeeded him was like a Pasha and he was always anxious to order work after my conveniences. He said: "I love those who fight for their community. I myself am such a fighter and I do not consider you to be a convict." He thus used to comfort me.

Again, the bench which was refused in the beginning was sent to me by the Chief Warder himself after some days. In the meanwhile I had received two religious books for reading from General Smuts. From this I concluded that the hardship I had to undergo were due, not to his express orders, but to the carelessness and indifference to himself and others, and also because the Indians were considered to be like Kaffirs. The only object of isolating me appeared to be to prevent my talking with others. After some trouble I got permission for the use of a note-book and pencil.

#### THE VISIT OF THE DIRECTOR

Before I was taken to Pretoria, Mr. Lichenstein had seen me with special permission. He had come

on office business, but he asked me how I was, etc. I was not willing to answer him on the point but he pressed me. So I said: "I will not tell you all but I will say this much that they treat me cruelly. General Smuts by this means wants me to give in, but that would never be as I was prepared to undergo whatever befell me, that my mind was at peace, but that you should publish this. After coming out, I myself would do so." He communicated it to Mr. Polak, who not being able to keep it to himself in his turn spoke to others, and Mr. David Polak thereupon wrote to Lord Selborne and an inquiry was held. The warder came for that purpose and I spoke to him the very words set out above. I also pointed out the defects which I have mentioned in the beginning. Thereupon after ten days he sent me a plank for a pillow, a night shirt and a handkerchief which I took. In my memorial to him, I had asked him to provide this convenience for all Indians. Really speaking in this respect Indians are softer than the Whites, and they cannot do without pillows.

#### HANDCUFFS

The opinion I had come to in consequence of my treatment in jail in the beginning was confirmed by what happened now. About four days after I received a witness summons in Mr. Pillay's case. So I was taken to Court. I was manacled this time and the warder took no time in putting on the handcuffs. I think this was done unintentionally. The Chief Warder had seen me and from him I had obtained leave to carry a book with me. He seemed to be under the impression that I was ashamed of the manacles and so I had asked permission to carry a book and hence he asked me to

hold the book in my hands in such a way as to conceal the handcuffs. This made me smile as I was feeling honoured in thus being manacled. The book that I was carrying was called "The Court of God is in their mind". I thought this a happy coincidence, because I thought what hardships might trouble me externally if I were such as to make God live in my heart; what should I care for the hardships? I was thus taken on foot, handcuffed, to Court.

#### LESSONS OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Some of the above details might be considered trivial, but my main object in setting them out has been that to minor as well as important matters you can apply the principles of resistance. I calmly acquiesced in all the troubles, bodily given to me by the warder with the result that not only was I able to remain calm and quiet, but that he himself had to remove them in the end. If I had opposed him, my strength of mind would have become weakened and I could not have done these more important things that I had to do and in the bargain made him my enemy.

My food difficulty also was solved at last, because I resisted and underwent suffering in the beginning.

The greatest good I derived from these sufferings was, that by undergoing bodily hardships I could see my mental strength clearly increasing and it is even now maintained. The experience of the last three months has left me more than ever prepared to undergo all such hardships with ease. I feel that God helps such conscientious objectors and is putting them to the test. He only burdens them with such sufferings as they can bear.

## WHAT I READ

The tale of my happiness or unhappiness is now at an end. Amongst the many benefits I received in these three months, one was the opportunity I got to read. At the start I must admit I fell into moods of despondency and thoughtfulness while reading and was even tired of these hardships and my mind played antics like a monkey. Such a state of mind leads many towards lunacy; but in my case my books saved me. They made up in a large measure for the loss of the society of my Indian brethren. I always got about three hours to read so that I was able to go through about thirty books and con over others which comprised English, Hindi, Gujarathi, Sanskrit and Tamil works. Out of these I consider Tolstoy's, Emerson's and Carlyle's worth mentioning. The two former related to religion. I had borrowed the Bible from the jail. Tolstoy's books are so simple and easy that any man can study and profit by them. Again, he is a man who practices what he preaches, and hence his writings inspire great confidence.

Carlyle's "French Revolution" is written in a very effective style. It made me think that from the White Nations we could hardly learn the remedy to remove the present miseries of India, because I am of opinion that the French people have secured no special benefits by their Revolution. This was what Mazzini thought too. There is a great conflict of opinion about this which it is hardly proper to mention here. Even there I saw some instances of passive resistance.

The Swamiji had sent me Gujarati, Hindi and Sanskrit books. Bhat Kesbavram had sent *Vedasabdasankhja* and Mr. Motilal Devan, the Upanishads. I also read the *Manusmriti*, the *Ramayana Sar*, published in Phoenix, the

*Patanjal Yog Darshana*, the *Ahnik Prakash* of Nathuramji, the *Sandhya Gutika* given by Professor Parmanand, the *Bhagvad Gita* and the works of the late Kavi Shri Rajchandra. This gave me much food for thought. The Upanishads produced in me great peacefulness. One sentence specially has struck to me. It means, "Whatever thou dost, thou shouldst do the same for the good of the soul." The words are of great importance and deserve great consideration too.

But I derived the greatest satisfaction from the writings of Kavi Shri Rajchandra. In my opinion they are such as should attract universal belief and popularity. His life was as exemplary and high as Tolstoy's. I had learnt some passages from them and from the *Sandhya* book by heart and repeated them at night while lying awake. Every morning also for half an hour I used to think over them and repeat what I had learnt by heart. This kept my mind in a state of cheerfulness night and day. If disappointment or despair attacked me at times, I would think over what I had read and my heart would instantly become gladdened and thank God. . . . I would only say that in this world good books make up for the absence of good companions so that all Indians, if they want to live happily in jail, should accustom themselves to reading good books.

#### MY TAMIL STUDIES

What the Tamils have done in the struggle no other Indian community has done. So I thought that if for no other reason than to show my sincere gratefulness to them, I should seriously read their books. So I spent the last month in attentively studying their language. The more I studied, the more I felt its beauties. It is an interesting and sweet language and from its construction and from

what I read, I saw that the Tamils counted in their midst, in the past and even now, many intelligent, clever and wise persons. Again, if there is to be one nation in India, those who live outside the Madras Presidency must know Tamil.

THE END

I wish that the result of the perusal of these experiences would be that he who knows not what patriotism is, would learn it and after doing so become a passive resister, and he who is so already, would be confirmed in his attitude. I also get more and more convinced that he who does not know his true duty or religion, would never know what patriotism or feeling for one's own country is.

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# JAIL LIFE IN INDIA

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## THE MEANING OF THE IMPRISONMENTS

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[We have followed Mr. Gandhi's jail experiences in South Africa. From time to time in the columns of *Young India*, Mr. Gandhi referred to the treatment of prisoners in Indian jails and as non-co-operators sought imprisonment in their hundreds in the closing week of 1921, Mr. Gandhi had occasion to refer again and again to jail discipline and the way that non-co-operators should conduct themselves within the prison walls. The following articles and notes were written for the guidance of his followers and much interest centres on the essay on the "Model Prisoner" in view of the fact that Mr. Gandhi himself was undergoing his prison experience in India. It was characteristic of Mr. Gandhi too that when Devadas his youngest son and Mr. C. Rajagopalachari visited him in the Yerawada jail, he told them that his prison life should not be made the subject of discussion in the press. Having courted imprisonment he would not complain of the treatment, but quietly and cheerfully bear the sufferings in the true spirit of the *Satyagrahi*. It was in this spirit too that he wrote to his friend Mr. Andrews that his ideal of a prison life was to be completely cut off from the world during the period of incarceration. He wrote in *Young India* (November 3, 1921).]

### HUNGER STRIKE

I cannot sufficiently warn non-co-operation prisoners against the danger of hastily embarking upon hunger strikes in their prisons. It cannot be justified as a means for removing irksome gaol restrictions. For a gaol is nothing if it does not impose upon us restrictions which we will not submit to in ordinary life. A hunger strike would be justified when inhumanity is practised, food issued which offends one's religious sense or which is unfit for human consumption. It would be rejected when it is offered in an



insulting manner. In other words, it should be rejected when acceptance would prove us to be slaves of hunger.

#### WHY SUFFER

Let there be no mistake about the meaning of these imprisonments. They are not courted with the object of embarrassing the Government though as a matter of fact they do. They are courted for the sake of discipline and suffering. They are courted because we consider it to be wrong to be free under a Government we hold to be wholly bad. No stone should be left unturned by us to make the Government realise that we are in no way amenable to its control. And no Government has yet tolerated such open defiance however respectful it may be. It might safely therefore be said that if we are yet outside the prison walls, the cause lies as much with us as with the Government. We are moving cautiously in our corporate capacity. We are still voluntarily obeying many of its laws. There was, for instance, nothing to prevent me from disregarding the Madras Government's order and courting arrest, but I avoided it. There is nothing to prevent me save my prudence or weakness from going without permission into the barracks and being arrested for trespass. I certainly believe the barracks to be the nation's property and not of a Government which I no longer recognise as representative of the people. Thus there is an apparent inconsistency between the statement on the one hand that it is painful to remain outside the prison walls under a bad Government and this deliberate avoidance on the other hand of arrest upon grounds which are not strictly moral but largely expedient. We thus avoid imprisonment, because first we think that the nation is not ready for complete civil revolt; secondly, we think that the atmosphere of voluntary obedience and

non-violence has not been firmly established ; and thirdly, we have not done any constructive corporate work to inspire self-confidence. We therefore refrain from offering civil disobedience amounting to peaceful rebellion, but court imprisonment merely in the ordinary pursuit of our programme and in defence of complete freedom of opinion and action short of revolt.

Thus it is clear that our remaining outside the gaols of a bad Government has to be justified upon very exceptional grounds and that our *Swaraj* is attained when we are in gaol or when we have bent the Government to our will. Whether therefore the Government feel embarrassed or happy over our incarceration, the only safe and honourable place for us is the prison. And if this position be accepted, it follows that when imprisonment comes to us in the ordinary discharge of our duty, we must feel happy because we feel stronger, because we pay the price of due performance of duty. And if exhibition of real strength is the best propaganda, we must believe that every imprisonment strengthens the people and thus brings *Swaraj* nearer.

#### SOMETHING STRIKING

But friends whisper into my ears, we must do something striking when the Prince comes. Certainly not for the sake of impressing him, certainly not for the sake of demonstration. But I would use the occasion of his imposed visit for stimulating us into greater activity. That would constitute the most glorious impression upon the Prince and the world, because we would have made an impression upon ourselves. The shortest way to *Swaraj* lies through self-impression, self-expression and self-reliance, both corporate and individual. I would certainly love the idea of filling the

gaols before the Prince arrives, but I see no way to it except after very vigorous *Swadeshi*. There is great progress undoubtedly in that direction, but there is not revolutionary or lightning speed. Arithmetical progression will not answer, geometrical progression is absolutely necessary. It is not enough for us to be washed by the *Swadeshi* spirit, we must be flooded with it. Then thousands of us involuntarily, as if by a common impulse, will march forward to civil disobedience. To-day we are obliged very rightly to measure every step for want of confidence. Indeed, I do not even feel sure that thousands of us are ready to suffer imprisonment, or that we have so far understood the message of non-violence as never to be ruffled or goaded into violence.

#### A REST CURE

And prisons have lost their terror for the people. Hardly a non-co-operator, save in one or two cases, has betrayed the slightest hesitation to go to gaol. On the contrary the majority have regarded it as a rest cure. Given an atmosphere of non-violence—a prime necessity—disappearance of fear of gaol and greater activity by reasons of imprisonments, and we have an ideal State for the establishment of *Swaraj*.

#### THE LOGICAL RESULT

The logical result of all this reasoning is, that we must quickly organise ourselves for courting arrests wholesale and that not rudely, roughly or blusteringly, certainly never violently, but peacefully, quietly, courteously, humbly, prayerfully, and courageously. By the end of December every worker must find himself in gaol unless he is specially required in the interest of the struggle not to make the attempt. Let it be remembered that in civil

disobedience we precipitate arrests and therefore may keep few outside the attempt.

#### REQUISITE CONDITIONS

Those only can take up civil disobedience who believe in willing obedience even to irksome laws imposed by the State so long as they do not hurt their conscience or religion and are prepared equally willingly to suffer the penalty of civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil has to be absolutely non-violent. The underlying principle being the winning over of the opponent by suffering, *i.e.*, love. ,

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## WORK IN GAOLS

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In the course of an article in *Young India*, December 16, 1921, Mr. Gandhi explains the correct attitude of the civil resister in regard to jail discipline :

An esteemed friend asked me whether now that the Government have provided an opportunity for hundreds to find themselves imprisoned and as thousands are responding, will it not be better for the prisoners to refuse to do any work in the gaols at all? I am afraid that suggestion comes from a misapprehension of the moral position. We are not out to abolish gaols as an institution. Even under *Swaraj* we would have our gaols. Our civil disobedience, therefore, must not be carried beyond the point of breaking the unmoral laws of the country. Breach of the laws to be civil assumes the strictest and willing obedience to the gaol discipline, because disobedience of a particular rule assumes a willing acceptance of the sanction provided for its breach. And immediately a person quarrels both with the rule and the sanction for its breach, he ceases to be civil and lends himself to the precipitation of chaos and anarchy. A civil resister is, if one may be permitted such a claim for him, a philanthropist and a friend of the State. An anarchist is an enemy of the State and is therefore a misanthrope. I have permitted myself to use the language of war because the so called constitutional method has become so utterly ineffective. But I hold the opinion firmly that civil disobedience is the purest type of constitutional agitation. Of course it becomes degrading and despicable if its civil, *i.e.*, non-violent character is a mere

camouflage. If the honesty of non-violence be admitted, there is no warrant for condemnation even of the fiercest disobedience because of the likelihood of its leading to violence. No big or swift movement can be carried on without bold risks, and life will not be worth living if it is not attended with large risks. Does not the history of the world show that there would have been no romance in life if there had been no risks? It is the clearest proof of a degenerate atmosphere that one finds respectable people leaders of society raising their hands in horror and indignation at the slightest approach of danger or upon an outbreak of any violent commotion. We do want to drive out the beast in man, but we do not want on that account to emasculate him. And in the process of finding his own status, the beast in him is bound now and again to put up his ugly appearance. As I have often stated in these pages what strikes me down is not the sight of blood under every conceivable circumstance. It is blood split by the non-co-operator or his supporters in breach of his declared pledge which paralyzes me as I know it ought to paralyse every honest non-co-operator.

Therefore to revert to the original argument, as civil resisters we are bound to guard against universal indiscipline. Gaol discipline must be submitted to until gaol Government itself becomes or is felt to be corrupt and immoral. But deprivation of comfort, imposition of restriction and such other inconveniences do not make gaol Government corrupt. It becomes that when prisoners are humiliated or treated with inhumanity as when they are kept in filthy dens or are given food unfit for human consumption. Indeed, I hope that the conduct of non-co-operators in the gaol will be strictly correct, dignified and yet submissive. We must not

regard gaolers and warders as our enemies but as fellow human beings not utterly devoid of the human touch. Our gentlemanly behaviour is bound to disarm all suspicion or bitterness. I know that this path of discipline on the one hand and fierce defiance on the other is a very difficult path, but there is no royal road to *Swaraj*. The country has deliberately chosen the narrow and the straight path. Like a straight line it is the shortest distance. But even as you require a steady and experienced hand to draw a straight line, so are steadiness of discipline and firmness of purpose absolutely necessary if we are to walk along the chosen path with an unerring step.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that it is not going to be a bed of roses for any of the civil resisters. And my head reels and the heart throbs when I recall the lives of Motilal Nehru and C. R. Das in their palatial rooms surrounded by numerous willing attendants and by every comfort and convenience that money can buy and when I think of what is in store for them inside the cold unattractive prison walls where they will have to listen to the clanking of the prisoner's chains in the place of the sweet music of their drawing-rooms. But I steel my heart with the thought that it is the sacrifice of just such heroes that will usher in *Swaraj*. The noblest of South Africans, Canadians, Englishmen, Frenchmen, Germans have had to undergo much greater sacrifices than we have mapped out for ourselves.

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## A MODEL PRISONER

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Himself a model prisoner, Mr. Gandhi in his article in *Young India* for December 29, 1921, points out that non-co-operators in prison should conduct themselves in an exemplary way. For "let it be remembered," he said, "that we are not seeking to destroy jails as such and that even under *Swaraj* we shall have to maintain jails." Therefore he said, "we really retard the advent of *Swaraj* if we encourage indiscipline."

Should non-co-operators shout *Bande Mataram* inside jail against jail discipline which may excite ordinary prisoners to violence, should non-co-operators go on hunger strike for the improvement of food or other conveniences, should they strike work inside jails on *hartal* days and other days? Are non-co-operators entitled to break rules of jail discipline unless they affect their conscience? Such is the text of a telegram I received from a non-co-operator friend in Calcutta. From another part of India when a friend, again a non-co-operator, heard of the indiscipline of non-co-operator prisoners, he asked me to write 'on the necessity of observing jail discipline. As against this I know prisoners who are scrupulously observing in a becoming spirit all the discipline imposed upon them.

It is necessary, when thousands are going to jail, to understand exactly the position a non-co-operator prisoner can take up consistently with his pledge of non-violence. Non-co-operation, when its limitations are not recognised, becomes a licence instead of being a duty and therefore becomes a crime. The dividing line between right and wrong is often so thin as to become indistinguishable. But it is a line that is breakable and unmistakable.



What is then the difference between those who find themselves in jails for being in the right and those who are there for being in the wrong? Both wear often the same dress, eat the same food and are subject outwardly to the same discipline. But whilst the latter submit to discipline most unwillingly and would commit a breach of it secretly and even openly if they could, the former will willingly and to the best of their ability conform to the jail discipline and prove worthier and more serviceable to their cause than when they are outside.\* We have observed that the most distinguished among the prisoners are of greater service inside the jails than outside. The coefficient of service is raised to the extent of the strictness with which jail discipline is observed.

Let it be remembered that we are not seeking to destroy jails as such. I fear that we shall have to maintain jails even under *Swaraj*. It will go hard with us if we let the real criminals understand that they will be set free or be very much better treated when *Swaraj* is established. Even in reformatories by which I would like

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\* On learning that the All Brothers were being put to humiliating treatment in their prison, Mahatma Gandhi observed in *Young India* :

"It is evident that instructions have gone forth that the policy of wise discretion is to give place to the policy of cast iron rigidity of enforcement of prison rules. Imagine Maulana Shaukat Ali or any of the high-spirited prisoners standing almost naked before the jailor and in the presence of one another and submitting to what to them must be a most humiliating examination. I can understand the necessity and utility of such examination of confirmed criminals for whom alone the ordinary prison regulations are framed, but it is nothing short of lunacy to enforce obedience to such regulations on the part of men who, apart from their political agitation, have been regarded as orderly citizens and in some cases even as distinguished public men. To enforce some of the present regulations in respect of such prisoners is hopelessly to ignore the reality and to court trouble. Ordinary discipline must be exacted from the best of men when they happen to be in prison, more so

to replace every jail under *Swaraj* discipline will be exacted. Therefore we really retard the advent of *Swaraj* if we encourage indiscipline. Indeed, the swift programme of *Swaraj* has been conceived on the supposition that we being a cultured people are capable of evolving high discipline within a short time.

Indeed, whilst on the one hand civil disobedience authorises disobedience of unjust laws or unmoral laws of a

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when they court imprisonment. Discomfort of jail life they must expect and cannot grumble at. Respect for the jail officials must be exacted from them if they will not give it voluntarily and gracefully. Our discipline must not take the form of humiliation. Discomfort must not be torture, and respect must not take the form of crawling on one's belly. And therefore, on pain of being put in irons in solitary confinement or of being shot, non-co-operating prisoners must decline even in the name of discipline to stand naked before the jailor, must decline in the name of discomfort to wear stinking clothes or to eat food that is unclean or indigestible and must similarly decline even in the name of respect to open out their palms or to sit in a crouching position or to shout '*Sarkar Ek Hat*' or '*Sarkar Salam*' when a jail official is passing. And if the Government is now intent upon putting us through the fire in the jails and subject us to physical pains in order to bend us, we must respectfully decline to be humiliated and must fall back upon God to give us strength to withstand studied humiliation and to suffer physical tortures instead. Let the proud Brothers and their comrades purify the Karachi jail.

But be the treatment what it may, the course before those who are put in prison is clear. We must not be irritated into taking a false or a hasty step. Our final salvation lies in the strictest adherence to our pledge. If we feel keenly, let us be still more non-violent, not less so; let us further concentrate on Civil Disobedience, let us lose no time in fulfilling the conditions necessary for Civil Disobedience. Let Hindus, Mussalmans and other races come still closer, let us rid ourselves of the remnants of foreign cloth still in our possession, let us bestir ourselves to manufacture more handspun *khadi*. Our progress depends upon calmly fulfilling the programme mapped out by ourselves and not wasting a single minute in idle fretting and fuming. Let us not worry about the ill-treatment of those who are in jail. The Government have made no terms with us as to treatment. We have unconditionally surrendered our bodies to them even to be hacked to pieces without a quiver, if God will give us the strength. We must not lose temper on any account."

State which one seeks to overthrow, it requires meek and willing submission to the penalty of disobedience and its attendant hardships.

It is now therefore clear that a civil resister's resistance ceases and his obedience is resumed as soon as he is under confinement. In confinement he claims no privileges because of the civility of his disobedience. Inside the jail by his exemplary conduct he reforms even the criminals surrounding him, he softens the hearts of jailors and others in authority. Such meek behaviour springing from strength and knowledge ultimately dissolves the tyranny of the tyrant. It is for this reason that I claim that voluntary suffering is the quickest and the best remedy for the removal of abuses and injustices.

It is now manifest that shouts of *Bande Mataram* or any other in breach of jail discipline are unlawful for a non-co-operator to indulge in. It is equally unlawful for him to commit a stealthy breach of jail regulations. A non-co-operator will do nothing to demoralise his fellow prisoners. The only occasion when he can openly disobey jail regulations or hunger-strike is, when an attempt is made to humiliate him or when the warders themselves break, as they often do, the rules for the comfort of prisoners or when food that is unfit for human consumption is issued as it often is. A case for civil disobedience also arises when there is interference with any obligatory religious practice.

## " AS HAPPY AS A BIRD "

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Writing to Mr. C. F. Andrews from Sabarmati prison under date 17th March 1922, Mr. Gandhi points out that a civil resister " may neither ask nor receive a privilege ".

" My dear Charlie,

I have just got your letter. . . I should certainly like your going to Ashram and staying there a while when you are free. But I would not expect you to see me in gaol; I am as happy as a bird. My idea of a gaol life—especially that of a civil resister—is to be cut off entirely from all connection with the outside world. To be allowed a visitor is a privilege—a civil resister may neither seek nor receive a privilege. The religious value of gaol discipline is enhanced by renouncing privileges. The forthcoming imprisonment will be to me more a religious than a political advantage. If it is a sacrifice, I want it to be the purest.

With love,

Yours

Mohan."

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## LIFE IN YERAWADA PRISON

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Prisoners are allowed to write one letter once a quarter and in the letter addressed to Hakim Ajmal Khan on the 14th April 1922, Mr. Gandbi describes his life and experiences in Yerawada prison.

Prisoners are allowed to have a visit once a quarter and to write and receive one letter. I have had my visit in the persons of Devadas and Rajegopalachari, but the one letter allowed I want to write to you.

As you will of course remember Banker and I were brought to the prison on the 18th of March, a Saturday. On the following Monday at 10 p.m. we were informed that we were to be moved to an unknown destination. At 11-30 the police superintendent escorted us to a special train which was waiting for us at Sabarmati. We received a basket of fruit and were well treated during the whole journey. For reasons of religion and also for considerations of health, the doctor of the Sabarmati prison permitted me to have the food to which I am accustomed, but Banker was ordered bread, milk, and fruit on medical grounds. The deputy police superintendent who accompanied us, was instructed to see that I had goat's milk and Banker cow's milk on the journey.

We left the train at Khirki where a police van was standing ready which brought us to the prison from which I am writing this letter.

As I had heard from former prisoners that life in this prison was not exactly pleasant, I was prepared for all kinds of difficulties. I had previously said to Banker that I would have to refuse food if they tried to forbid me to

spin, for I had taken a vow on the Hindu New Year's Day to spin for at least half an hour a day unless I were ill or travelling. I told him he was not to get excited if I had to adopt a hunger strike and that he was not to follow my example out of a mistaken feeling of solidarity. He was thus aware of how I looked at the affair.

Thus we were not surprised when the director announced as we entered the prison that we must leave our spinning-wheel and the basket of fruit. I told him emphatically that we had both been allowed to spin every day in Sabarmati prison and that I must insist on spinning in accordance with my vow. That brought the reply that Yerawada was not Sabarmati.

I also said to the director of the prison that, for reasons of health, we had been allowed to sleep in the open air at the Sabarmati prison. But here we could not hope for this favour either.

Our first impression was thus rather unfavourable. I did not let this trouble me and moreover the fact that I had practically fasted for the last two days prevented me from being affected. Banker felt everything much more hardly. He is afflicted with nightmares and so does not like to be alone at night. Besides, this was the first painful experience of his life whereas I was accustomed to the cage.

Next morning the director appeared to ask how we were. I saw that my judgment of him, formed on a first impression, had been mistaken. In any case he had been in a flurry the night before. We did not arrive till after the prescribed time and besides he was quite unprepared for what must have seemed to him an extraordinary request. Now he understood that I did not want to keep my spinning-wheel out of crankiness

but—rightly or wrongly—from a religious need. When he also perceived from conversation with us that there was no question of a hunger strike, he gave the order that we should both be allowed to have our spinning-wheels again. Also, he no longer held out against the view that the food we asked for was a necessity for us. So far as I have had the opportunity for observation, physical needs are well looked after in this prison. I found both the superintendent and the head warder tactful and friendly. The first days are of no account. My relations with these two officials are as cordial as is possible between a prisoner and his warders.

I see quite clearly, however, that our prison system is almost, if not quite, devoid of humanity. The superintendent tells me that the other prisoners are not treated differently from myself. If that is the case, then the physical needs of the prisoners are completely satisfied, but there is no consideration for human needs. The prison rules are not adapted to this.

This may be seen, for example, from the attitude of the prison committee which consists of the administrator, a clergyman and some other persons. It happened to meet on the morning after our arrival and came to ask us our wishes. I pointed out to them that Banker suffered from nervousness and should for that reason sleep in my cell with the door open. I cannot describe the contempt and unfeeling indifference with which this request was treated. As the gentlemen went away I heard one of them say disdainfully: "Nonsense!" What do they know of Banker, his position in life and the education he has enjoyed? It was not even their task to go and see him to discover what had moved me to make this request which seemed so natural to

me. Undisturbed sleep was certainly more important for Banker than good food.

An hour after this conversation, a warder informed Banker that he was to be transferred to another section. I felt like a mother who has been robbed of her only child. It had seemed to me a happy dispensation that Banker was arrested and sentenced along with me. While we were still at Sabarmati, I informed the authorities that I would esteem it a particular favour if they would leave Banker with me and pointed out that we could be mutually helpful to each other. I read to him from the Gita and he looked after my feeble body. Banker had lost his mother only a few months before. When I was speaking to her a few days before her death, she said to me that death would not be hard for her now that she knew her son was under my protection. The noble woman could not know how completely powerless I was to prove when it was a question of protecting her son. When Banker left me, I recommended him to the care of God and awakened confidence in him that God would preserve His own.

Since then he has received permission to come to me for half an hour every day to teach me carding in which he is proficient. This takes place in the presence of a warder who has to see that we speak only of matters necessary to our occupation. At present I am trying to induce the general inspector and the prison superintendent to allow us to read the Gita for the few moments we are together. This request of mine is being considered.

I had to use all my ingenuity to get leave to keep seven books, five of a purely religious character, an old dictionary which I value greatly and an Urdu manual which Maulana Abdul Kalam Azad gave me. My wish was against the strict order that prisoners may only read



books taken from the prison library. So I was urged to present the seven books to the library and then borrow them back again. I remarked in a friendly way to the superintendent that I would gladly do this with all my other books, but that he might as well demand my right arm as these books, which were dear to me partly because of their contents and partly because of their importance as souvenirs. I do not know what means the superintendent had to use in order finally to persuade the higher authorities to let me keep the books. . . .

The use of a pocket knife presents another problem. If I want to prepare my toasted bread (I cannot bear it otherwise) I must cut it into slices. And I must also cut up my lemons if I want to squeeze them. But a pocket knife is regarded as a "lethal weapon" which would be a great danger in the hands of a prisoner. I gave the superintendent the choice of either depriving me of bread and lemons or allowing me a knife. After a great deal of fuss, my own penknife was again placed at my disposal. But it remains in the keeping of the warder and is only handed to me when I actually need it. Every evening it has to be given up to the head warder who gives it back again to the convict warder in the morning.

This species will be new to you. "Convict warders" are generally prisoners on a long sentence who are given warder's uniform for good conduct and entrusted with tasks which do not involve any great responsibility. They are allowed to wear warder's uniform but remain under continual supervision. One of these warders who was sentenced for murder, has to watch me during the day. At night he is given an assistant whose appearance reminds me of Shaukat Ali. This last, it is true, has only been the case since the general inspector gave orders that my cell

door might remain open. Both warders are very harmless fellows. They do not molest me in any way and I never permit myself to talk to them. I have to exchange a few words now and then with the warder, who watches me in the day time, about my desires and needs but otherwise I have no communication with him.

My cell is situated in a triangular block whose longest side—it faces West—contains eleven cells. One of my fellow prisoners quartered in the same section is, I surmise, an Arabic State prisoner. As he does not speak Hindustani and I unfortunately have no mastery of Arabic, our speech is limited to a mutual good morning. The base of the triangle is formed by a stout wall and the shortest side by a barbed-wire fence with a door which opens on to a spacious square. The triangular space within the central block was formerly divided in two by a chalk line I was forbidden to cross. Thus I had a space of about seventy feet long at my disposal on which I could move freely. When Mr. Khambata, an inspection official, was here recently on a visit of inspection, I drew his attention to this white line as a proof of the lack of human feeling in the orders of the prison administration. He himself was not in favour of this restriction and reported in this sense with the result that the whole triangle was made free to me. It is about a hundred and forty feet long. Now my desires are set on the open square on the other side of the door. But that is perhaps too human to be allowed. But since the white line has been removed, I may perhaps hope that the barbed wire fence will also fall and I may have still more freedom of movement. It is certainly a ticklish matter for the director, and he will need time for deep reflection.

I am in solitary confinement and may not speak to any one. Some of the Dhavd prisoners are in the same gaol with me, the great Gangadhar Rao of Belgaum, for example, Verumal Begraj, the reformer of Sukkam, and Lalit, a Bombay publisher. I do not see any of them though I really do not see how my society could do them any harm. They again could not harm me. Nor would we make arrangements for our escape nor conspire for this purpose. Besides, by acting in this way we would do the Government the greatest favour. But if it is a question of protecting them from the infection of my dangerous ideas, the isolation has come too late. They are already thoroughly infected. And there is only one thing I could do here, make them still more enthusiastic about the spinning wheel.

What I said about my isolation is not intended as a complaint. I feel happy. My nature likes loneliness. I love quietness. And now I have an opportunity of engaging in studies that I had to neglect in the outside world.

But not all prisoners feel like me and enjoy solitary confinement. It is as inhuman as it is unnecessary. It could be avoided by a proper distribution of the prisoners. But now the prisoners are arbitrarily shut up together and no director, however human his feelings, could be just to all the men and women of different sorts who are entrusted to his care while he has not a free hand. So he merely does his best to be just to their bodies and neglects their souls.

Hence it comes that prisons are abused for political ends and therefore the political prisoner is not safe from persecution even within their walls.

I shall end the description of my life in prison with a description of the course of my day. My cell is in itself decent, clean and airy. The permission to sleep in the open air is a great blessing to me as I am accustomed to sleeping in the open. I rise at 4 o'clock to pray. The inhabitants of *Satyagraha*-Ashram will, I am sure, be glad to know that I have not ceased to say the morning prayers and sing some of the hymns which I know by heart. At 6-30 I begin my studies. I am not allowed a light. But as soon as it is light enough for reading I start work. At 7<sup>o</sup> in the evening, when it is too dark to read, I finish my day's work. At 8 o'clock I betake myself to rest after the usual Ashram prayer. My studies include the Koran, the Ramayana of Tulsidas, books about Christianity I got from Standing, exercises in Urdu and much else. I spend six hours on these literary efforts. Four hours I devote to hand-spinning and carding. To begin with, when I had only a little cotton at my disposal, I could only spin for thirty minutes. But now the administration has placed sufficient cotton at my disposal, very dirty, to be sure, perhaps very good practice for a beginner in carding. I spend an hour at carding and three at spinning. Anasuyabai and Maganlal Gandhi have sent me bobbins. I want to ask them not to send me any more for the moment. On the other hand, some fine well cleaned cotton would be a great service, but they should not send me more than two pounds at a time. I am very much set on making my own bobbins. To my way of thinking every spinner should learn to card. I learnt in an hour. It is more difficult to manage than spinning, but it is easier to learn.

Spinning becomes more and more an inner need with me. Every day I come nearer to the poorest of the poor,

and in them to God. The four hours I devote to this work are more important to me than all the others. The fruits of my labour lie before my eyes. Not one impure thought haunts me in these four hours. While I read the Gita, the Koran, or the Ramayana, my thoughts fly far away. But when I turn to the spinning-wheel or work at the hackle, my attention is directed on a single point. The spinning-wheel, I know, cannot mean so much to every one. But to me the spinning-wheel and the economic salvation of impoverished India are so much one that spinning has for me a charm all its own. My heart is drawn backwards and forwards between the spinning-wheel and books. And it is not impossible that in my next letter I will have to tell you that I am spending even more time on spinning and carding.

Please say to Maulana Abdul Bari Sahib who recently informed me that he had begun to spin, that I count on his keeping pace with me in progress. His good example will cause many to make a duty of this important work. You may tell the people at Ashram that I have written the promised primer and will send it to them if I am allowed. I hope it will also be possible for me to write the contemplated religious primer and also the history of our fight in South Africa.

In order to divide the day better I take only two meals instead of three. I feel quite well on it. With regard to food the prison superintendent is most accommodating. For the last three days he has let me have goat's milk and butter, and I hope in a few days to be able to make my own chapatis.

Besides two new warm blankets, a cocoa mat and two sheets have been placed at my disposal. And a pillow has also arrived since. I could really do without

it. Up till now I have used my books or my spare clothes as a pillow. But Rajagopalachar used all his influence to have a pillow given to me. There is also a bath-room with a lock available which I am allowed to use every day. A special cell has been put at my disposal for work, at least while it is not required for other purposes. The sanitary arrangements have been improved.

So my friends need not be at all anxious about me. I am as happy as a bird and I do not feel that I am accomplishing less here than outside the prison. My stay here is a good school for me and my separation from my fellow workers should prove whether our movement is an independently evolving organism or merely the work of one individual and, therefore, something very transient. I myself have no fears. Thus I am not eager to know what is happening outside. If my prayers are sincere and come from a faithful heart they are more useful—of this I am certain—than any fussy activity.

I am very anxious on the other hand about the health of our friend Das and have good reason to reproach his wife for not informing me how he was. I hope that Motilalji's asthma is better.

Please try to convince my wife that it is better for her not to visit me. Devadas made a scene when he was here. He could not bear to see me standing in the superintendent's presence when he was admitted. The proud and sensitive boy burst into tears and I had difficulty in calming him. He should have realized before that I am now a prisoner and as such have no right to sit in the prison superintendent's presence. Of course, Rajagopalachar and Devadas should have been offered seats. That this was omitted was certainly

not due to want of courtesy. I do not think the superintendent is accustomed to be present at meetings of this kind. But in my case he declined to take the risk. But I should not like the scene to be repeated on a visit from my wife and even less that an exception should be made for me and chairs offered. I can keep my dignity even standing. And we must have patience for a little until the English people have advanced enough to extend on every occasion and universally their lovable politeness with unforced cordiality to us Indians. Besides I do not long for visitors and would like to ask my friends and relations to restrain themselves in this matter. People may always come to me on business affairs, since for this it doesn't matter whether external circumstances are favourable or not.

I hope that Chotani Nian has distributed the spinning-wheels he has given among the poor Mohammedan women of Panchmahals, Ostkandesb, and Agra. Unfortunately I have forgotten the name of the woman missionary who wrote me from Agra. Possibly Kristodas will remember it.

I have almost finished with the Urdu manual and would be very grateful for an Urdu dictionary and also any other book you or Dr. Ansari may select for me.

I hope that you are well. To ask you not to overwork would be to demand the impossible. I can only pray that God will keep you well and strong in all your work.

With loving greetings to all fellow workers.

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## EQUALITY OF TREATMENT

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From time to time Mr. Gandhi had to address those in charge of the prison in regard to the treatment of fellow prisoners. In the following letters to the Governor of Yerawada Central Prison, dated 1st May 1923 and 12th November 1923, he wrote two characteristic letters declining the special privileges afforded him and requesting the authorities to treat him in the same manner in which his erstwhile colleagues and followers were treated. He demanded for them the same treatment in regard to food and other comforts that were permitted him.

You were good enough to show me the order to the effect that certain prisoners sentenced to simple imprisonment will be assigned to a special section and to inform me that I was of the number. In my view some of the prisoners condemned to hard labour, like Messrs. Kaujalgi, Jeramdas and Bhansali are not worse criminals than I am. Besides, they had probably had a much higher position than I and in any case they were accustomed to a more comfortable life than I have led for years. So long as such prisoners are not also assigned to the special group, it is impossible for me, however much I might like it, to avail myself of the advantage of special prison orders. I would therefore be very grateful if you would strike my name off the list of the special section.

At the time that you informed my comrade, Mr. Abdul Gani, that the prison rules did not allow you to grant him food which cost more than the official ration, I drew your attention to the fact that your predecessor permitted all my comrades as well as myself to arrange our own diet. I further informed you that it was very unpleasant for me to enjoy a favour denied to Mr. Abdul



Gani, and that for this reason my diet must also be restricted to what is in accordance with the rules and what is allowed to Mr. Abdul Gani. You were good enough to ask me to accept the old rations for the time being and to say that the whole question would be discussed with the general inspector who was shortly to visit the prison. I have now waited ten days. If I am to keep a good conscience I cannot wait any longer, for I have nothing at all to discuss with the general inspector. I have no reason to complain to him of the decision you took in the case of Abdul Gani. I willingly recognize that you are powerless even if you were inclined to help my comrade. Nor is it my aim to work for a change in the food regulations of the prison. I desire one thing only, to protect myself against any preferential treatment. . . .

I therefore ask you from next Wednesday to give me no more oranges and grapes. In spite of this, my food will still be more expensive than the official ration. I do not know if I need four pounds of goat's milk, but so long as you refuse to reduce my food so that its cost is in accordance with the rules I must, although reluctantly, accept the four pounds of milk.

I do not need to assure you that there is no question of dissension. . . . It is only for the sake of my own inner peace that I propose that you should restrict my diet and I beg for your understanding and approval.

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## ILLNESS AND RELEASE

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After two years of imprisonment, Mr. Gandhi's health had given way and it became necessary, to save his life, to operate for appendicitis. Before he had recovered from the operation Government decided to remit, unconditionally, the remainder of his sentence. Mr. Gandhi spoke very warmly of the skill and consideration with which he was treated by his doctors. The Rt. Hon. Sastri who was present at the time of the operation, said in the course of a statement to the press: "I sat outside marvelling at the exhibition I had witnessed of high-mindedness, forgiveness, chivalry and love transcending ordinary human nature and what a mercy it was that the non-co-operation movement should have had a leader of such serene vision and sensitiveness to honour." It was at this time too that Mr. Gandhi addressed a message to the people of India through Mr. Mahomed Ali, the President of the Congress. The message which is dated Sassoon Hospital, Poona, 7th February 1924, ran as follows:

I send you, as the President of the Congress, a few words which I know our countrymen expect from me on my sudden release. I am sorry that the Government have prematurely released me on account of my illness. Such a release can bring me no joy, for I hold that the illness of a prisoner affords no ground for his release.

I would be guilty of ungratefulness if I did not tell you and through you the whole public, that both the gaol and the hospital authorities have been all attention during my illness. Colonel Murray, the superintendent of the Yerawada Prison, as soon as he suspected that my illness was at all serious, invited Colonel Maddock to assist him, and I am sure promptest measures were taken by him to secure for me the best treatment possible. I could not have been removed to the David and Jacob Sassoon Hospitals a moment earlier. Colonel Maddock and his staff have treated me with the utmost attention and kindness. I may not omit the nurses who have surrounded me with sisterly

care. Though it is now open to me to leave this hospital, knowing that I can get no better treatment anywhere else, with Colonel Maddock's kind permission I have decided to remain under his care till the wound is healed and no further medical treatment is necessary.

The public will easily understand for some time to come I shall be quite unfit for active work, and those who are interested in my speedy return to active life will hasten it by postponing their natural desire to see me. I am unfit, and shall be for some weeks perhaps, to see a number of visitors. I shall better appreciate the affection of friends if they will devote greater time and attention to such national work as they may be engaged in and especially to hand-spinning.

My release has brought me no relief. Whereas before release I was free from responsibility, save that of conforming to gaol discipline and trying to qualify myself for more efficient service, I am now overwhelmed with a sense of responsibility I am ill-fitted to discharge. Telegrams of congratulations have been pouring in upon me. They have but added to the many proofs I have received of the affection of our countrymen for me. It naturally pleases and comforts me. Many telegrams however betray hopes of results from my service which stagger me. The thought of my utter incapacity to cope with the work before me humbles my pride.

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## LETTERS TO THE ASHRAM

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Great was the rejoicing in Saharmati Ashram on Sunday the 18th May 1930 when a fat envelope containing loving lines for all was received from Gandhiji. The authorities of Yerawada Jail permitted Gandhiji to send words of greeting and comfort to his Ashram and relatives. Addressing Mira Bai, he thus opens his writing:

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“Yours is the first letter I take up to write from the jail and that on the silence day.

I have been quite happy and have been making up for arrears of rest. The nights here are cool and, as I am permitted to sleep right under the sky, I have refreshing sleep. About the change made in the manner of taking the diet, you will learn from my general letter.

It was a great treat to receive the wheel so thoughtfully sent and with things so carefully packed in it. The carding bow, the superintendent tells me, was lost on the way by the friends who brought it.\* I am in no hurry for it as you have sent me a liberal quantity of slivers.

I do not know who sent me the books. They were not the ones I wanted. . . . However this mistake does not matter much as I do not miss the books just now. I am giving as much time as I can to the *takli*. I find that I have no speed on it at all. I hardly get thirty rounds in one hour. For the first day I gave nearly seven hours to nearly reach 160 rounds. I was washed out at the end of the performance. I must learn the trick of getting

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\* It has since been found by the friends and posted to the Jail.

more speed. I am, therefore, in no hurry to go to the books. . . .

The prison officials are all kind and attentive. Love.  
**BAPU."**

Yerawada, 12-5-'30.

*P.S.*—"I believe it will be possible for me to receive the Ashram post. You may, therefore, send a weekly letter together with the Ashram post."

In his general letter he writes :

"My health is alright. I rise in the morning at the Ashram hour (4 A.M.) I am given a light, so I can read the Gita chapters according to our custom. I am gradually recovering from my exhaustion of so many days. I rest regularly at 8 in the morning, and 12 noon, and thus get some two to three hours sleep during the day. I gave up oranges during my march, but have begun to take them again here. On the first day I took raw goat's milk and am continuing it for the present. I take about three pounds. I shall have to reduce it a little or take it in the form of curds. In the mornings, also, I take cold water instead of hot. They give me full facilities for making it hot, but if the body can be maintained on cold water, why bother about hot water. I have left off honey. I had begun taking cold water baths, but from yesterday I am again bathing with hot water. The goat is milked in my presence, so there is no question as to the cleanliness of the milk. If raw milk proves unsatisfactory I will, of course, get it heated.

They have given me a man to clean vessels, etc. Dates and raisins I am taking. There is no reason to be anxious about my diet."

Then referring to friends who might be going to send him fruits and other comforts, he says :

"There is, and ought to be, no time in these days for taking superfluous care of others. We have no money and ought to have no money for superfluous expenses."

Referring to his spinning, he says :

"As for my spinning, it is regular. I make a daily hank of yarn.

I never saw to my speed on *takli* outside the jail. . . . Interest should be created in spinning *takli*. In Wardha, some people have reached the speed of 80 rounds in half an hour. Let those who have learned there find out their exact speed and write to me."

In the course of his lines to Ba (Kasturbai), he says :

"How nice it was that I saw you and all the sisters the evening previous to my arrest! And I was able to go with you up to your residence which gave me much pleasure. God's favours pour down upon us as rains from Heaven. . . .

None of you should get nervous or troubled. All the verses of the sisters' prayer were thoughtfully arranged. . . . I hope they may be repeated with full concentration every morning."

To his son Devadas, he says :

"I do not know where you are. But there is God above to take care of us, so let us not worry about one another."

To many others he has addressed a line or two. To Lakshmi the little 'untouchable' adopted daughter, to the young girls of the Ashram, and lastly to the little children. He who can write the most stupendous seditious articles that ever dared a mighty Empire, can also pen the sweetest children's letter, wrote Mira.

" Little Birds,

Ordinary birds cannot fly without wings. With wings, of course, all can fly. But if you, without wings, will learn how to fly, then all your troubles will indeed be at an end. And I will teach you.

See, I have no wings, yet I come flying to you every day in thought. Look, here is little Vimala, here is Hari and here Dharmakumar. And you also can come flying to me in thought.

There is no need of a teacher for those who know how to think. The teacher may guide us, but he cannot give us the power of thinking. That is latent in us. Those who are wise get wise thoughts.

Tell me who, amongst you, are not praying properly in Prabhuphai's evening prayer.

Send me a letter signed by all, and those who do not know how to sign may make a cross.

**BAPU's blessings."**

Yerawada Palace,  
Silence day.

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# THE CHAMPARAN ENQUIRY

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## AGRARIAN TROUBLES IN BEHAR PLANTATIONS

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For many years together the relations between landlords and tenants and the circumstances attending the cultivation of indigo in the Champaran district were unsatisfactory. At the instance of Behar friends, Mr. Gandhi interested himself in the cause of the labourers and undertook to make a personal investigation of their conditions. Mr. Gandhi describes this in a chapter in the autobiography entitled "Face to Face with *Ahimsa*".

My object was to inquire into the condition of the Champaran agriculturists and understand their grievances against the indigo planters. For this purpose it was necessary that I should meet thousands of the ryots. But I deemed it essential before starting on my inquiry to know the planters' side of the case and see the Commissioner of the Division. I sought and was granted appointments with both.

The Secretary of the Planters' Association told me plainly that I was an outsider and that I had no business to come between the planters and their tenants, but if I had any representation to make, I might submit it in writing. I politely told him that I did not regard myself as an outsider and that I had every right to inquire into the condition of the tenants if they desired me to do so.

The Commissioner on whom I called, proceeded to bully me and advised me forthwith to leave Tirhut.

I acquainted my co-workers with all this and told them that there was a likelihood of Government stopping me from proceeding further and that I might have to go to jail earlier than I had expected and that if I was to be arrested, it would be best that the arrest should take place in Motihari or if possible in Bettiah. It was advisable,



therefore, that I should go to those places as early as possible.

Champaran is a district of the Tirhut division and Motihari is its headquarters. Rajkumar Shukla's place was in the vicinity of Bettiah and the tenants belonging to the *kothis* in its neighbourhood were the poorest in the district. Rajkumar Shukla wanted me to see them and I was equally anxious to do so.

So I started with my co-workers for Motihari the same day. Babu Gorakh Prasad harboured us in his home which became a caravanserai. It could hardly contain us all. The very same day we heard that about five miles from Motihari a tenant had been ill-treated. It was decided that in company with Babu Dharanidhar Prasad I should go and see him the next morning and we accordingly set off for the place on elephant's back. An elephant by the way is about as common in Champaran as a bullock-cart in Gujarat. We had scarcely gone half way when a messenger from the Police Superintendent overtook us and said that the latter had sent his compliments. I saw what he meant. Having left Dharanidharbabu to proceed to the original destination, I got into the hired carriage which the messenger had brought. He then served on me a notice to leave Champaran and drove me to my place. On his asking me to acknowledge the service of the notice, I wrote to the effect that I did not propose to comply with it and leave Champaran till my inquiry was finished. Thereupon I received a summons to take my trial the next day for disobeying the order to leave Champaran.

I kept awake that whole night writing letters and giving necessary instructions to Babu Vrajakishore Prasad.

The news of the notice and the summons spread like wild fire, and I was told that Motihari that day witnessed unprecedented scenes. Gorakhababu's house and the court house overflowed with men. Fortunately I had finished all my work during the night and so was able to cope with the crowds. My companions proved the greatest help. They occupied themselves with regulating the crowds, for the latter followed me wherever I went.

A sort of friendliness sprang up between the officials—Collector, Magistrate, Police Superintendent—and myself. I might have legally resisted the notices served on me. Instead I accepted them all and my conduct towards the officials was correct. They thus saw that I did not want to offend them personally but that I wanted to offer civil resistance to their orders. In this way they were put at ease and instead of harassing me, they gladly availed themselves of my and my co-workers' co-operation in regulating the crowds. But it was an ocular demonstration to them of the fact that their authority was shaken. The people had for the moment lost all fear of punishment and yielded obedience to the power of love which their new friend exercised.

It should be remembered that no one knew me in Champaran. The peasants were all ignorant. Champaran, being far up north of the Ganges and right at the foot of the Himalayas in close proximity to Nepal, was cut off from the rest of India. The Congress was practically unknown in those parts. Even those who had heard the name of the Congress, shrank from joining it or even mentioning it. And now the Congress and its members had entered this land, though not in the name of the Congress yet in a far more real sense.

In consultation with my co-workers I had decided that nothing should be done in the name of the Congress. What we wanted was work and not name, substance and not shadow. For the name of the Congress was the *bête noire* of the Government and their controllers—the planters. To them the Congress was a byword for lawyers' wrangles, evasion of law through legal loopholes, a byword for bomb and anarchical crime and for diplomacy and hypocrisy. We had to disillusion them both. Therefore we had decided not to mention the name of the Congress and not to acquaint the peasants with the organisation called the Congress. It was enough we had thought, if they understood and followed the spirit of the Congress instead of its letter.

No emissaries had therefore been sent there, openly or secretly, on behalf of the Congress to prepare the ground for our arrival. Rajkumar Shukla was incapable of reaching the thousands of peasants. No political work had yet been done amongst them. The world outside Champaran was not known to them and yet they received me as though we had been age-long friends. It is no exaggeration but the literal truth to say that in this meeting with the peasants I was face to face with God, *Ahimsa* and Truth.

When I come to examine my title to this realisation, I find nothing but my love for the people. And this in turn is nothing but an expression of my unshakeable faith in *Ahimsa*.

That day in Champaran was an unforgettable event in my life and a red-letter day for the peasants and for me.

According to the law I was to be on my trial, but truly speaking Government was to be on its trial. The Commissioner only succeeded in trapping Government in the net which he had spread for me.

## THE ENQUIRY AND SETTLEMENT

In response to an insistent public demand to inquire into the conditions under which Indian labourers work in the indigo plantations, Mr. Gandhi arrived at Muzaffarpur on the 15th April 1917, whence he took the midday train for Motihari. Next day he was served with a notice to quit the district "by next available train as his presence," the notice announced, "will endanger the public peace and may lead to serious disturbance which may be accompanied by loss of life". Mr. Gandhi replied :

With reference to the order under Sec. 144, Cr. P. C., just served upon me, I beg to state that I am sorry that you have felt called upon to issue it, and I am sorry too that the Commissioner of the Division has totally mis-interpreted my position. Out of a sense of public responsibility, I feel it to be my duty to say that I am unable to leave this district, but if it so pleases the authorities, I shall submit to the order by suffering the penalty of disobedience.

I most emphatically repudiate the Commissioner's suggestion that "my object is likely to be agitation". My desire is purely and simply for "genuine search for knowledge" and this I shall continue to satisfy so long as I am left free.

Mr. Gandhi appeared before the Magistrate on the 11th instant and read the following statement before the Court:

With the permission of the Court I would like to make a brief statement showing why I have taken the very serious step of seemingly disobeying the order made under S. 144 of the Cr. P. C. In my humble opinion it is a question of difference of opinion between the local administration and myself. I have entered the country with motives of rendering humanitarian and national service. I have done so in response to a pressing invitation to come and help the ryots, who urge they are not

being fairly treated by the indigo planters. I could not render any help without studying the problem. I have therefore come to study it with the assistance, if possible, of the administration and the planters. I have no other motive and I cannot believe that my coming here can in any way disturb public peace or cause loss of life. I claim to have considerable experience in such matters. The administration however have thought differently. I fully appreciate their difficulty, and I admit too, that they can only proceed upon the information they receive. As a law-abiding citizen, my first instinct would be, as it was, to obey the order served upon me. I could not do so without doing violence to my sense of duty to those for whom I came. I feel that I could just now serve them only by remaining in their midst. I could not, therefore, voluntarily retire. Amid this conflict of duty I could only throw the responsibility of removing me from them on the administration. I am fully conscious of the fact that a person, holding in the public life of India a position such as I do, has to be most careful in setting examples. It is my firm belief that in the complex constitution under which we are living, the only safe and honourable course for self-respecting man is, in the circumstances such as face me, to do what I have decided to do, that is, to submit without protest to the penalty of disobedience. I have ventured to make this statement not in any way in extenuation of the penalty to be awarded against me, but to show that I have disregarded the order served upon me, not for want of respect for lawful authority, but in obedience to the high law of our being—the voice of conscience.

Under instructions from higher authorities the notice was soon withdrawn. Early in June, a Commission was appointed to enquire into the agrarian troubles in the Behar plantations with Mr. Gandhi himself as one of the members of the Commission. In December 1917, the Champaran Agrarian Bill based on the recommendations of the Commission was passed in the Behar Legislative Council when the Hon. Mr. Maude, who moved the Bill, made a frank statement of the scandals which necessitated the enquiry, thus justifying Mr. Gandhi's work on behalf of the labourers.

# THE KAIRA QUESTION

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## THE SITUATION IN KAIRA

In the year 1916-17 there was serious and widespread failure of crops in the district of Kaira in Gujarat. Under the revenue rules the ryots were entitled to full suspension of taxes if the yield was less than 4 as. in the rupee and half suspension if between 4 and 6as. The Government granted complete suspension to one village only out of a total of 600, half suspension to some 104 villages and issued orders to collect revenue from the rest. The ryots claimed that the Government were wrong in their estimate, and Mr. Gandhi and Mr. V. J. Patel who conducted an enquiry also came to the same conclusion. The Government persisted in collecting revenues as usual. Petitions and protests having been of no avail, the ryots resorted to passive resistance under the guidance of Mr. Gandhi. In the following lecture at Bombay in February 1918, Mr. Gandhi narrated the story of the trouble in Kaira in his usually brief and lucid manner :

I do not want to say much. I have received a letter asking me to be present at to-morrow's deputation that is going to wait on His Excellency the Governor, and I am sure I will be able to explain to him the true facts. Still I must make it clear here that the responsibility of the notice issued by the Gujarat Sabha lies on me. I was at Ahmedabad before that notice was issued where the matter of Kaira district was being discussed, when it was decided that the Gujarat Sabha ought to take part in the matter. I think that, as regards this notice, a mountain has been made out of a mole-hill. Every one knew what the notice was when it was being framed. Nobody then even dreamt that Government would misinterpret it. The Sabha had with it sufficient data about the plight of the people. They came to know that Government officials were collecting taxes and the people were even selling their cattle to pay the taxes. The matter had come to

such a pass, and knowing this, the Sabha thought it better to issue a notice to console the people who braved these hardships. And the notice was the result of that information, and I have every hope that in the deputation that is going to wait on the Governor, the result of the deliberations will end in the success of the people.

#### COMMISSIONER'S WRATH

If the Commissioner had not been angry with us, and had talked politely with the deputation that waited on him and had not misinstructed the Bombay Government, such a grave crisis would not have eventuated and we would not have had the trouble of meeting here this evening. The Sabha's request was to suspend the collection of dues till the negotiations were over. But Government did not take this proper course and issued an angry Press Note. It was my firm belief—and even now I firmly believe—that the representatives of the people and Government could have joined together and taken the proper steps. I regret to have to say that Government has made a mistake. Perhaps subordinate officers of Government would say to Government that the notice was issued not from a pure motive but from some other ulterior motive. If Government are impressed with this erroneous belief, those who have stood by the people, I hope, will continue to stand by them to the end and will not retreat. Any responsible right-thinking man could have given them the same advice. People possess the same rights as the authorities have, and public men have every right to advise the people of their rights. The people that do not fight for their rights are like slaves (*hear, hear*), and such people do not deserve Home Rule. When authorities think that they can take anything from the people and can interfere, a difficult situation arises. And if such a

situation arises, I must plainly say that those who have given the people the right advice, will stand by them till the end.

#### THE WEAPONS

I have not yet come to any conclusion and I sincerely trust that those who understand the responsibility, will not hesitate to undergo hardships in order to secure justice. (*Applause.*) And in such an eventuality I hope you will not beat an ignominious retreat. The first and the last principle of passive resistance is, that we should not inflict hardships on others but put up with them ourselves in order to get justice, and Government need not fear anything if we make up our mind as we are bent on getting sheer justice from it and nothing else. To get that justice we must fight with the authorities, and the people that do not so fight are but slaves. We can have only two weapons on occasions like this: Revolt or passive resistance, and my request is for the second remedy always. The right of suffering hardships and claiming justice and getting our demands is from one's birth. Similarly we have to get justice at the hands of Government by suffering hardships. We must suffer hardships like brave men. What I have to say is, resort to the right means, and that very firmly, in order to remove the distress through which the Gujarat people are passing. It is my conviction that, if we tell the truth to the British Government, it can ultimately be convinced, and if only we are firm in our resolve, rest assured that Kaira people shall suffer wrongs no more. (*Loud cheers.*)

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## THE VOW OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

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As a result of the persistent refusal of Government to recognise the serious state of affairs in Kaira and grant a suspension of revenue, a passive resistance movement was inaugurated under Mr. Gandhi's lead. At the meeting on the 22nd March 1918, at Nadiad, Mr. Gandhi exhorted the ryots to resort to *Satyagraha*, and over 200 men signed the following declaration :

“Knowing that the crops of our villages are less than four annas, we had requested the Government to suspend the revenue collection till the ensuing year. As however Government has not acceded to our prayer, we, the undersigned, hereby solemnly declare that we shall not pay the full or remaining revenue but we will let the Government take such legal steps as they may think fit to collect the same and we shall gladly suffer all the consequences of our refusal to pay. We shall allow our lands to be confiscated but we shall not, of our own accord, pay anything and thereby lose our self-respect and prove ourselves wrong. If Government decide to suspend the second instalment of the revenue throughout the district, those amongst us who are in a position to pay, will pay the whole or the balance of the revenue as may be due. The reason why those of us who have the money to pay and still do not, is that if they do, the poorer might in panic sell their things or borrow to pay and thereby suffer.

Under the circumstances we believe it is the duty of those who are able to pay to protect the poor.”

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## STATEMENT ON THE KAIRA DISTRESS

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Mr. Gandhi sent to the Press the following statement on the Kaira distress under date 28th March 1918 :

In the district of Kaira, the crops for the year 1917-18 have, by common admission, proved a partial failure. Under the Revenue rules if the crops are under four annas, the cultivators are entitled to full suspension of the Revenue assessment for the year; if the crops are under six annas, half the amount of assessment is suspended. So far as I am aware, the Government have been pleased to grant full suspension with regard to one village out of nearly 600, and half-suspension in the case of over 103 villages. It is claimed on behalf of the ryots that the suspension is not at all adequate to the actuality. The Government contend that in the vast majority of villages crops have been over six annas. The only question therefore at issue is, whether the crops have been under four annas or six annas, as the case may be, or over the latter figure. Government valuation is in the first instance made by the Talatis assisted by the chiefman of the villages concerned. As a rule, no check on their figures is considered necessary, for it is only during partial failure of crops that Government valuation of crops may have to be challenged. The Talatis are as a class obsequious, unscrupulous and tyrannical. The chief men are especially selected for their docility. The 'Talatis' one aim is naturally to collect full assessment as promptly as possible. We sometimes read accounts of assiduous Talatis having been awarded *pugrees* for making full collection. In applying to the Talatis the adjectives I

have given, I wish to cast no reflections on them as men. I merely state the fact. The Talatis are not horn; they are made; and rent-collectors all the world over have to cultivate a callousness without which they could not do their work to the satisfaction of their masters. It is impossible for me to reproduce the graphic description given by the ryots of the recent collectors which the 'Talatis chiefly are. My purpose in dealing with the 'Talatis is to show that the Government's valuation of the crops is derived in the first instance from the tainted source and is presumably biased against the ryots. As against their valuation we have the universal testimony of ryots, high and low, some of whom are men of position and considerable wealth, who have a reputation to lose and who have nothing to gain by exaggerations except the odium of Talatis and possibly higher officials. I wish to state at once that behind this movement there is no desire to discredit the Government, or an individual official. The movement is intended to assert the right of the people to be effectively heard in matters concerning themselves.

It is known to the public that the Hon'ble Mr. G. K. Parekh and Mr. V. J. Patel invited and assisted by the Gujarat Sabha carried on investigations as also Messrs. Deodhar, Joshi and Thakkar of the Servants of India Society. Their investigation was necessarily preliminary and brief and therefore confined to a few villages only. But the result of their enquiry went to show that the crops in the majority of cases were under four annas. As their investigation, not being extensive enough, was capable of being challenged, and it was challenged, I undertook a full inquiry with the assistance of over 20 capable, experienced and impartial men of influence and status. I personally visited over 50 villages and met as many men in

the villages as I could, inspected in these villages most of the fields belonging to them and after a searching cross-examination of the villagers, came to the conclusion that their crops were under four annas. I found that among the men who surrounded me, there were present those who were ready to check exaggerations and wild statements. Men knew what was at stake if they departed from the truth. As to the rabi crops and the still standing kharif crops, I was able by the evidence of my own eyes to check the statements of the agriculturists. The methods adopted by my co-workers were exactly the same. In this manner nearly 400 villagers were examined and with but a few exceptions, crops were found to be under four annas, and only in three cases they were found to be over six annas. The method adopted by us was, so far as the kharif crops were concerned, to ascertain the actual yield of the whole of the crops of individual villages and the possible yield of the same village in a normal year. Assuming the truth of the statements made by them, this is admittedly an absolute test, and any other method that would bring about the same result must be rejected as untrue and unscientific; and as I have already remarked, all probability of exaggeration was avoided in the above-named investigation. As to the standing rabi crops, there was the eye estimate and it was tested by the method above mentioned. The Government method is an eye estimate and therefore a matter largely of guess-work. It is moreover open to fundamental objections which I have endeavoured to set forth in a letter to the Collector of the District. I requested him to treat Vadthal—a well known and ordinarily well-to-do village of the district with the railway line passing by it and which is near a trade

centre—as a test case and I suggested that if the crops were in that village proved to be under four annas, as I hold they were, it might be assumed that in the other villages less fortunately situated, crops were not likely to be more than four annas. I have added to my request a suggestion that I should be permitted to be present at the inquiry. He made the inquiry but rejected my suggestion and therefore it proved to be one-sided. The Collector has made an elaborate report on the crops of that village which, in my opinion, I have successfully challenged. The original Government valuation, I understand, was twelve annas, the Collector's minimum valuation is seven annas. If the probably wrong methods of valuation to which I have drawn attention and which have been adopted by the Collector are allowed for, the valuation according to his own reckoning would come under six annas and according to the agriculturists it would be under four annas. Both the report and my answer are too technical to be of value to the public. But I have suggested that, as both the Government and agriculturists hold themselves in the right, if the Government have any regard for popular opinion, they should appoint an impartial committee of inquiry with the cultivators' representatives upon it, or gracefully accept the popular view. The Government have rejected both the suggestions and insist upon applying coercive measures for the collection of revenue. It may be mentioned that these measures have never been totally suspended and in many cases the ryots have paid simply under pressure. The Talatis have taken away cattle and have returned them only after the payment of assessment. In one case, I witnessed a painful incident. A man having his milch buffalo taken away from him and it was only on my happening

to go to the village that the buffalo was released ; this buffalo was the most valuable property the man possessed and a source of daily bread for him. Scores of such cases have already happened and many more will no doubt happen hereafter if the public opinion is not ranged on the side of the people. Every means of seeking redress by prayer has been exhausted. Interviews with the Collector, the Commissioner and His Excellency have taken place. The final suggestion that was made is this: Although in the majority of cases people are entitled to full suspension, half suspension should be granted throughout the district except for the villages which show, by common consent, crops over six annas. Such a gracious concession may be accompanied by a declaration that the Government would expect those who have ready means voluntarily to pay up the dues, we the workers on our part undertaking to persuade such people to pay up the Government dues. This will leave only the poorer people untouched. I venture to submit that acceptance of this suggestion can only bring credit and strength to the Government. Resistance of popular will can only produce discontent which, in the case of fear-stricken peasantry such as of Kaira, can only find an underground passage and thus demoralise them. The present movement is an attempt to get out of such a false position, humiliating alike for the Government and the people. And how do the Government propose to assert their position and so-called prestige? They have a Revenue Code giving them unlimited powers without a right of appeal to the ryots against the decisions of the Revenue Authorities. Exercises of these powers in a case like the one before us, in which the ryots are fighting for a principle and the authorities for prestige

would be a prostitution of justice, of a disavowal of all fair-play. These powers are :

(1) Right of summary execution.

(2) Right of exacting a quarter of the assessment as punishment.

(3) Right of confiscation of land, not merely rayatwari but even inami or sanadia, and the right of keeping a man under *hajat*.

Those remedies may be applied singly or all together, and unbelievable though it may seem to the public, it may be mentioned that notices of the application of all these remedies but the last have been issued. Thus a man owning two hundred acres of land in perpetuity and valued at thousands of rupees, paying a small assessment rate, may at the will of the authority lose the whole of it, because for the sake of principle he respectfully refuses voluntarily to pay the assessment himself and is prepared meekly but under strong protest to penalties that may be inflicted by law. Surely vindictive confiscation of property ought not to be the reward for orderly disobedience which, properly handled, can only result in progress all round and in giving the Government a bold and a frank peasantry with a will of its own.

I venture to invite the press and the public to assist these cultivators of Kaira who have dared to enter up a fight for what they consider is just and right. Let the public remember this also that unprecedentedly severe plague has decimated the population of Kaira. People are living outside their homes in specially prepared thatched cottages at considerable expenses to themselves. In some villages mortality has been tremendous. Prices are ruling high on which, owing to the failure of crops, they can but take little advantage and have to suffer all the disadvantages thereof. It is not money they want so much as the voice of a strong, unanimous and emphatic public opinion.

## REPLY TO THE COMMISSIONER

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Mr. Gandhi wrote from Nadiad under date 15th April, the following reply to the Commissioner's address to the cultivators to desist from following Mr. Gandhi's lead in regard to the vow of passive resistance. The Commissioner's exhortations to the agriculturists amounted to a threat detailing the consequences of non-payment of revenues. Mr. Gandhi replied as follows :

The publication of the summary of the Commissioner's Gujarati address to the Kaira cultivators necessitates a reply in justice to the latter as also the workers.

I have before me a verbatim report of the speech. It is more direct than the summary in the laying down of the Government policy. The Commissioner's position is that the revenue authorities' decision regarding suspension is final. They may and do receive and hear complaints from the ryots but the finality of their decision cannot be questioned. This is the crux of struggle. It is contended on behalf of the ryots that where there are, in matters of administrative orders, sharp differences of opinion between local officials and them, the points of differences are and ought to be referred to an impartial committee of inquiry. This, it is held, constitutes the strength of the British constitution. The Commissioner has on principle rejected this position and invited a crisis. And he has made such a fetish of it that he armed himself beforehand with a letter from Lord Willingdon to the effect that even he should not interfere with the Commissioner's decision. He brings in the war to defend his position and abjures the ryots and me to desist from our cause at this time of peril to the Empire. But I venture



to suggest that the Commissioner's attitude constitutes a peril fargraver than the German peril, and I am serving the empire in trying to deliver it from this peril from within. There is no mistaking the fact that India is waking up from its long sleep. The ryots do not need to be literate to appreciate their rights and their duties. They have but to realise their invulnerable power and no Government, however strong, can stand against their will. The Kaira ryots are solving an imperial problem of the first magnitude in India. They will show that it is impossible to govern men without their consent. Once the Civil Service realises this position, it will supply to India truly civil servants who will be the bulwark of the people's rights. To-day the Civil Service rule is a rule of fear. The Kaira ryot is fighting for the rule of love. It is the Commissioner who has produced the crisis. It was, as it is now, his duty to placate the people when he saw that they held a different view. The revenue of India will be no more in danger because a Commissioner yields to the popular demands and grants concessions than the administration of justice was in danger when Mrs. Maybrick was reprieved purely in obedience to the popular will, or the Empire was in danger because a corner of a mosque in Cawnpore was replaced in obedience to the same demand. Had I hesitated to advise the people to stand firm against the Commissioner's refusal to listen to their prayer instead of taking the open and healthy course it has taken, their discontent would have burrowed under and bred ill-will. That son is a true son of his father who rather than harbour ill-will against him, frankly but respectfully tells him all he feels and equally respectfully resists him if he cannot truthfully obey his commands. I apply the same law to the

relations between the Government and the people. There cannot be seasons when a man must suspend his conscience. But just as a wise father will quickly agree with his son and not incur his ill-will, especially if the family was in danger from without, even so a wise Government will quickly agree with the ryots rather than incur their displeasure. War cannot be permitted to give a licence to the officials to exact obedience to their orders, even though the ryots may consider them to be unreasonable and unjust.

The Commissioner steels the hearts of the ryots for continuing their course by telling them that for a revenue of four lakhs of rupees, he will for ever confiscate over a hundred and fifty thousand acres of land worth over three crores of rupees and for ever declare the holders, their wives and children unworthy of holding any lands in Kaira. He considers the ryots to be misguided and contumacious in the same breath. These are solemn words:

"Do not be under the impression that our Mamlatdars and our Talatis will realise the assessment by attaching and selling your movable property. We are not going to trouble ourselves so much. Our officers' time is valuable. Only by your bringing in the monies shall the treasuries be filled. This is no threat. You take it from me that parents never threaten their children. They only advise. But if you do not pay the dues, your lands will be confiscated. Many people say that this will not happen. But I say it will. I have no need to take a vow. I shall prove that I mean what I say. The lands of those who do not pay will be confiscated. Those who are contumacious will get no lands in future. Government do not want their names on their Records of Rights. Those who go out shall never be admitted again."

I hold that it is the sacred duty of every loyal citizen to fight unto death against such a spirit of vindictiveness and tyranny.

## THE MEANING OF THE COVENANT

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On the 20th April, Mr. Gandhi in company of Mrs. Gandhi, Messrs. Manu Subedar, V. J. Patel and others visited three villages, *viz.*, Kasar, Ajarpura and Samarkha in Anand taluka. At Ajarpura which was visited by the Mamlatdar of the taluka only two days back Mr. Gandhi delivered a long address. He said :

First of all I want to talk to you a little about the Mamlatdar's visit. The Mamlatdar told you that the covenant must be observed. But he misinterpreted the meaning of the covenant. He told you that your forefathers had entered into a covenant with the Government to pay a certain assessment for the lands in their possession. Now let us see as to what kind of covenant our forefathers had entered into. Our ancient law covenant is that we should give to our king one-fourth of the grains that grow in our fields. It meant that whenever our crops failed we had to pay nothing. The present Government have changed this law and forces up to pay in money. I do not know whether it has gained thereby. Perhaps they may have. But remember well that this is our ancient law and you have taken the vow in accordance with it. And again it is the Government law that if the crops are under four annas, the collection of revenue must be suspended till the next year. This year you sincerely believe that your crops are under four annas and therefore your revenue must be suspended. The Government say that it is not your right but it is only a grace that it suspends revenue till the next year. Let me declare to you that it is no grace on the part of Government but it is your right. And if it is a grace, Government cannot show it at its sweet will.

## REPLY TO KAIRA PRESS NOTE

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Mr. Gandhi sent the following reply to the press note issued by the Bombay Government in the first week of May 1918 on the situation in the Kaira district.

The Government press note on the Kaira trouble is remarkable for the sins both of omission and commission. As to the paragraph devoted to Messrs. Parekh's and Patel's investigations, I wish only to say that at the interview with His Excellency the Governor, the Commissioner challenged the accuracy of their statements. I immediately suggested the appointment of a committee of inquiry. Surely it was the most proper thing that the Government could have done and the whole of the unseemly executions, the removal of the cultivators' milch cattle and their ornaments, the confiscation orders, could have been avoided. Instead, as the press note says, they posted a Collector "of long experience". What could he do? The best of officials have to move in a vicious circle. They have to carry out the traditions of a service which has made of prestige a fetish and which considers itself to be almost infallible and rarely admits its mistakes.

With reference to the investigation by Mr. Devdhar and his co-workers, the press note leaves on the reader the impression that the Commissioner had responded to their suggestions. At the interview at which I was present, he challenged the report they had submitted to him and said distinctly that whatever relief he granted would not be granted because of the report which he said in substance was not true so far as it contained any new things and was not new in so far as it contained any true statements.

I cannot weary the public with the tragedy in the Matar taluka. In certain villages of the taluka which are affected by the irrigation canals, they have a double grievance: (1) the ordinary failure of crops by reason of the excessive rainfall, and (2) the total destruction of crops by reason of overflooding. In the second case they are entitled to full remission. So far as I am aware in many cases it has not been granted.

It is not correct to say that the Servants of India Society stopped investigation in the Thasra taluka, because there was no case for inquiry but because they deemed it unnecessary, so their report says, as I had decided to inquire into the crops of almost every village.

The press note is less than fair in calling my method of inquiry 'utopian.' I do adhere to my contention that if the cultivators' statements may be relied upon, my method cannot but yield absolutely reliable results. Who should know better than the cultivator himself the yield of his crops? I refuse to believe that lakhs of men could conspire to tell an untruth when there was no great gain in view and suffering a certainty. It is impossible for thousands of men to learn by heart figures as to the yield—actual and probable—of over ten crops so that the total in each case would give less than a four-anna crop. I contend that my method contains automatic safeguards against deception. Moreover I had challenged the official *annawari* alike of kharif and rabi crops. When I did so, the rabi crops were still standing. I had therefore suggested that they could cut the rabi crops and test the yield and thus find the true *annawari*. I had suggested this specially of Vadthal. My argument was, that if the cultivators' *annawari* of such rabi crops was found to be correct and the officials' wrong, it was not improper to infer that

the cultivators' valuations regarding the kharif crops were also right. My offer was not accepted. I may add that I had asked to be allowed to be present when the Collector visited Vadthal which was taken as a test village. This request was also not acceded to.

The note is misleading inasmuch as it states that in arriving at my *annawari*, I have not taken into account the rabi crops or the cotton crops. I have taken these crops into account. I have simply questioned the logic of the official system. The reason is obvious. If out of a population of one thousand men, only two hundred men grew rabi crops, it would be highly unjust to the eight hundred men to force up their *annawari*, if without the rabi crops their crops showed only four annas or under.

#### GROSS INACCURACIES

I am surprised at the gross inaccuracies in the paragraph devoted to the crops in Limbasi. In the first instance I was not present when the official inquiry was made, and in the second instance the wheat which is valued at Rs. 13,445 included wheat also from two neighbouring villages, so that out of the crops estimated at Rs. 13,445 three assessments had to be paid. And what are Rs. 13,445 in a population of eighteen hundred men? For the matter of that, I am prepared to admit that the Limbasi people had a rice crop which too gave them as many rupees. At the rate of forty rupees per head per year to feed a man, the Limbasi people would require Rs. 72,000 for their food alone. It may interest the public to know that according to the official *annawari*, the Limbasi wheat alone should have been Rs. 83,021. This figure has been supplied to me by the Collector. To demonstrate the recklessness with which the press note has been prepared, I may add that if the Limbasi

people are to be believed, the whole of the wheat crop was on the threshing floor. According to their statements, nearly one-third was foreign wheat. The Limbasi wheat therefore would be under Rs. 9,000. The official *annawari* is ten annas. Now according to the actual yield, the wheat *annawari* of Limbasi was 11 annas as against the official ten annas. Moreover a maund of wheat per *vigha* is required as seed and the Limbasi cultivators had 3,000 (Rs. 3 per maund equals Rs. 9,000) maunds of wheat on 1,965 *vighas*, i.e., the wheat crop was a trifle over the seed. Lastly, whilst the crop was under harvest, I had offered to the Collector to go over to Limbasi myself and to have it weighed so that there might be no question of the accuracy or otherwise of the cultivators' statements. But the Collector did not accept my offer. Therefore I hold that the cultivators' figures must be accepted as true.

#### ADVOCACY OF PASSIVE RESISTANCE

Merely to show how hopelessly misleading the press note is, I may state that the Gujarat Sabha did not pass a resolution advising passive resistance. Nor that it would have shirked it but I felt myself that passive resistance should not be the subject of a resolution in a Sabha whose constitution was governed by the rule of majority and so the Gujarat Sabha's resolution left it open to individual members to follow their own bent of mind. It is true that most of the active members of the Sabha are engaged in the Kaira trouble.

I must repudiate totally the insinuation that I dissuaded payment by people who wished to pay. The figures given in the press note showing the collection in the different talukas, if they prove anything, prove that the hand of the law has hit them hard and that the fears of

the Ravanis and the Talatis have proved too strong for them. When after confiscation and sales under execution the Government show a clean bill and no arrears, will they contend that there was no case for relief or inquiry ?

I admit that the suspension is granted as a matter of grace and not as a matter of right enforceable by law, but the concession is not based on caprice but is regulated by properly defined rules and the Government do not contend that if the crops had been under four annas they could have withheld suspension. The sole point throughout has been the difference as to *annawari*. If it is true that in granting concessions, the Government take into account also other circumstances, *e.g.*, in the words of the press note, the general economic situation, suspension is doubly necessary this year because of the plague and high prices. The Collector told me definitely that he could not take this last into account. He could grant suspension only under the rules which had reference only to crops and nothing else.

I think I have shown enough here to warrant a committee of inquiry and I submit that, as a matter of principle, it would be worth while granting the inquiry even if one cultivator remains with an arrear against him, because there is nothing found to attach and the Government might be reluctant to sell his lands. The people have challenged the accuracy of Talatis' figures; in some cases there are Talatis themselves ready to come forward to show that they were asked to put up the *annawari* found by them. But if the inquiry is now held to be unnecessary, why do the Government not grant suspension especially when admittedly there is only a small number left to collect from and more especially when, if suspension is granted, well-to-do cultivators are ready to pay.



It is evident now that Government have surrendered the question of principle for which the Commissioner has stood.

#### VICEROY'S CALL FOR CONCORD

The Viceroy has appealed for the sinking of domestic differences. Is the appeal confined only to the ryots or may the officials also yield to the popular will when the popular demand is not immoral or unjust and thus produce contentment?

If distress means starvation, I admit that the Kaira people are not starving. But if sale of goods to pay assessment or to buy grain for food be an indication of distress there is enough of it in the district. I am prepared to show that hundreds have paid their assessment either by incurring debts or by selling their trees, cattle or other valuables. The most grievous omission in the press note, however, is that of the fact that collections are being made in a vindictive spirit. The cultivators are being taught a lesson for their contumacy so called. They are under threat to lose their lands worth 3 crores of rupees for an assessment of 4 lakhs of rupees. In many cases a quarter of the assessment has been exacted as a penalty. Is there not in the above narrative room for a doubt that the officials may be in the wrong?

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## END OF THE KAIRA STRUGGLE

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The following is the translation of a manifesto issued in Gujarati to the people of Kaira by Messrs. M. K. Gandhi and Vallabhbhai J. Patel :

The struggle that the people of the district of Kaira entered upon on the 22nd of March last, has come to an end. The people took the following vow on that day :

. Our village has had crops under four annas. We therefore requested the Government to postpone collection to the next year, but they did not do so. We the undersigned therefore solemnly declare that we shall not pay the assessment for the year whether it be wholly or in part. We shall undergo all the sufferings that may result from such refraining. We shall also allow our lands to be confiscated should they do so. But we shall not by voluntary payment allow ourselves to be regarded as liars and thus lose our self-respect. If the Government would graciously postpone for all the remaining villages collection of the balance of the revenue we, who can afford it, would be prepared to pay up revenue whether it be in full or in part. The reason why the well-to-do amongst us would not pay is that if they do, the needy ones would out of fright sell their chattels or incur debts and pay the revenues and thus suffer. We believe that it is the duty of the well-to-do to protect the needy against such a plight.

The meaning of this vow is that the Government suspending collection of the revenue from the poor, the well-to-do should pay the assessment due by them. The Mamlatdar of Nadiad at Uttersanda, on the 3rd of June, issued such orders whereupon the people of Uttersanda who could afford were advised to pay up. Payments have already commenced there.

On the foregoing order having been passed at Uttersanda, a letter was addressed to the Collector stating that if orders like the one in Uttersanda were passed everywhere, the struggle would come to an end and it would be possible to inform His Excellency the Governor on the 10th instant—the day of the sitting of the Provincial

War Conference—that the domestic difference in Kaira was settled. The Collector has replied to the effect that the order like the one in Uttersanda is applicable to the whole district. Thus the peoples' prayer has at last been granted. The Collector has also stated in reply to a query about *Chothai* orders that the orders will not be enforced against those who may voluntarily pay up. Our thanks are due to the Collector for this concession.

#### AN END WITHOUT GRACE

We are obliged to say with sorrow that although the struggle has come to an end, it is an end without grace. It lacks dignity. The above orders have not been passed either with generosity or with the heart in them. It very much looks as if the orders have been passed with the greatest reluctance. The Collector says :

Orders were issued to all Mamlatdars on the 25th April that no pressure should be put on those unable to pay. Their attention was again drawn to these orders in a proper circular issued by me on the 22nd of May and to ensure that proper effect was given to them. The Mamlatdars were advised to divide the defaulters in each village into two classes, those who could pay and those who were unable to pay on account of poverty.

If this was so, why were these orders not published to the people? Had they known them on the 25th April what suffering would they not have been saved from. The expenses that were unnecessarily incurred by the Government in engaging the officials of the district in effecting executions would have been saved. Wherever the assessment was uncollected the people lived with their lives in their hands. They have lived away from their homes to avoid attachments. They have not had even enough food. The women have suffered what they ought not to have. At times they have been obliged to put up with insults from insolent Circle Inspectors and to helplessly watch their milch buffaloes taken away from

them. They have paid *Chothai* fines and had they known the foregoing orders, they would have been saved all the miseries. The officials knew that this relief for the poor was the crux of the struggle. The Commissioner would not even look<sup>at</sup> at this difficulty. Many letters were addressed to him but he remained unbending. He said : "Individual relief cannot be granted, it is not the law." Now the Collector says : "The orders of April 25 so far as it related to putting pressure on those who were really unable to pay on account of poverty, were merely a re-statement of what are publicly known to be the standing orders of Government on that subject." If this is really true, the people have suffered deliberately and through sheer obstinacy. At the time of going to Delhi, Mr. Gandhi wrote to the Commissioner requesting him to grant or to issue orders to the above effect so that the good news could be given to His Excellency the Viceroy. The Commissioner gave no heed to the request.

#### OFFICIAL'S OBSTINACY

The officials have failed to be popular because of their obstinacy, because of their mistaken belief that they should never admit being in the wrong and because of their having made it a fetish that it should never be said of them that they had yielded to anything like popular agitation. It grieves us to offer this criticism. But we have permitted ourselves to do so as their friends.

#### A TRIBUTE TO KAIRA PEOPLE

But though the official attitude is thus unsatisfactory, our prayer has been granted and it is our duty to accept the concession with thankfulness. Now there is only 8 per cent of the assessment remaining unpaid. It was a point of honour with us till now to refuse payment. Conditions having materially altered, it is a point of honour

for a *Satyagrahi* to pay up the assessment. Those who can afford should pay without causing the Government the slightest trouble and thus show that, when there is no conflict between the dictates of conscience and those of man-made law they are able to compel anybody to obey the law of the land. A *Satyagrahi* sometimes appears momentarily to disobey laws and the constituted authority only to prove in the end his regard for both.

In making a list of those who are unable to pay, we should apply a test so rigid that no one can challenge our finding. Those whose incapacity for payment is at all in doubt should consider it their duty to pay. The final decision as to the incapacity for payment will rest with the authorities, but we believe that the judgment of the people will have its full weight.

#### HONOUR OF A *Satyagrahi*

By their courage the people of Kaira have drawn the attention of the whole of India. During the last six months they have had full taste of the fruits of observing truth, fearlessness, unity, determination and self-sacrifice. We hope that they will still further cultivate these great qualities, will move forward in the path of progress and shed lustre on the name of the Motherland. It is our firm belief that the people of Kaira have truly served their own cause as well as the cause of *Swaraj* and the Empire.

May God bless you!

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## THE LAST PHASE

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The *Satyagraha* campaign in Kaira was thus practically over. Several meetings were held, some to greet the *Satyagrahis* released from jail, some to celebrate the victory of the campaign and several more to do honour to Mr. Gandhi for his wise and courageous lead. At the meeting of the 27th July at Nadiad, Mr. Gandhi thus welcomed those who were released from the jail :

We stand on the threshold of a twilight—whether morning or evening twilight we know not. One is followed by the night, the other heralds the dawn. If we want to see the dawning day after the twilight and not the mournful night, it behoves every one of us who are Home Rulers to realise the truth at this juncture, to stand for it against any odds and to preach and practise it at any cost unflinchingly. Only will the correct practice of truth entitle them to the name of Home Rulers.

The meeting in Nadiad was called for the special purpose of doing honour to Mr. Gandhi. On receiving the address, Mr. Gandhi spoke to this effect :

I am grateful to you for the address of honour you have given me. But a servant of the people cannot accept honours. He is supposed to have consecrated his all to the people and I could but consecrate all that you have given me to you. One who has made "service" his religion, cannot lust for honour; the moment he does so, he is lost. I have seen that some are inspired by the lust of help while some by the lust of fame. The lust of help is sordid enough, but that of fame is even more so. The misdeeds of the latter leads a man into one more wicked than those into which the former does. I therefore beseech you that if you want really to do me honour, do

not please give me a shower bath of addresses and honours. The best way to honour me is to do my behest and to carry my principles into practice. And what, forsooth, have I done in this campaign? If anything, I can only claim the cleverness that is necessary for a commander in picking out men for his campaign. I was clever enough in doing that, but there too I should not have achieved anything if you had not acquitted yourselves well. The choice of my lieutenant, I may here add, was particularly happy. I will say that without the help of Mr. V. J. Patel we could not have won the campaign. He had a splendid practice, he had his municipal work to do, but renounced it all and threw himself in the campaign. I before I close, I must give my tribute of praise to those who deserve it more than all the rest and whose names will probably never adorn your honours list. First foremost I place the sweeper in the Ananthashram, who has rendered me a service which is service in the highest sense of the term and for which I can never express adequate gratefulness. Next come the children of the Ashram who have ungrudgingly without any sense of reward served me, looked after me at all hours of the day and night and thus rendered a service of which vakils and barristers are incapable.

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MOHANDAS KARAMCHAND GANDHI

# EARLIER INDIAN SPEECHES

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## THE DUTIES OF BRITISH CITIZENSHIP

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The following statement made by Mr. Gandhi at the time of the troubles in the Transvaal explains his attitude towards law and legislators, and enunciates the duties of true British citizenship. It is as true of conditions in India as in South Africa and may appropriately be prefixed to his Indian speeches.

I consider myself a lover of the British Empire, a citizen (though voteless) of the Transvaal, prepared to take my full share in promoting the general well-being of the country. And I claim it to be perfectly honourable and consistent with the above profession to advise my countrymen not to submit to the Asiatic Act as being derogatory to their manhood and offensive to their religion. And I claim, too, that the method of passive resistance adopted to combat the mischief is the clearest and safest because, if the cause is not true, it is the resisters, and they alone, who suffer. I am perfectly aware of the danger to good government in a country inhabited by many races unequally developed when an honest citizen advises resistance to a law of the land. But I refuse to believe in the infallibility of legislators. I do believe that they are not always guided by generous or even just sentiments in their dealings with unrepresented classes. I venture to say that if passive resistance is generally accepted, it will once and for ever avoid the contingency of a terrible death-struggle and bloodshed in the event (not impossible) of the natives being exasperated by a stupid mistake of our legislators.

It has been said that those who do not like the law may leave the country. This is all very well spoken from a cushioned chair, but it is neither possible nor becoming for men to leave their homes because they do not subscribe to certain laws enacted against them. The Uitlanders of the Boer regime complained of harsh laws; they too were told that if they did not like them, they could retire from the country. Are Indians, who are fighting for their self-respect, to slink away from the country for fear of suffering imprisonment or worse? If I could help it, nothing would remove Indians from the country save brute force. It is no part of a citizen's duty to pay blind obedience to the laws imposed on him. And if my countrymen believe in God and the existence of the soul, then, while they may admit that their bodies belong to the State to be imprisoned and deported, their minds, their wills, and their souls must ever remain free like the birds of the air and are beyond the reach of the swiftest arrow.

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## ON ANARCHICAL CRIMES'

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The following is the summary of an address delivered at the Students' Hall, College Square, Calcutta, in March 1915 with the Hon. Mr. Lyon in the chair. The speech created a profound impression at the time and is therefore of importance though it is here given only in an abbreviated form.

Though it was the command of his *Guru*, the late Mr. Gokhale, that Mr. Gandhi during his stay here should keep his ears open but his mouth shut, he could not resist the temptation of addressing the meeting. It was the opinion of the speaker as well as his departed *Guru* that politics should not be a sealed book to the student community ; for he saw no reason why students should not study and take part in politics. He went the length of saying that politics should not be divorced from religion. They would agree with him as well as their teachers, professors and the worthy Chairman that literary education is of no value if it is not able to build up a sound character. Could it be said that the students or the public men in this country are entirely fearless ? This question engaged the speaker's serious attention although he was in exile. He understood what political dacoity or political assassination was. He had given the subject his most careful attention and he came to the conclusion that some of the students of his country were fired no doubt with zeal in their minds and with love for their Motherland, but they did not know how they should love her best. He believed that some of them resorted to nefarious means, because they did not work in the fear of God but in the fear of

man. He was there to tell them that if he was for sedition, he must speak out sedition and think loudly and take the consequence. If he did so, it would clear the atmosphere of any taint of hypocrisy. If the students who are the hopes of India, nay, perhaps of the Empire, did not work in the fear of God, but in the fear of man, in the fear of the authorities—the Government—whether it is represented by the British or an indigenous body, the results would prove disastrous to the country. They should always keep their minds open, regardless of what the consequence would be; youths who have resorted to dacoities and assassinations, were misguided youths with whom they should have absolutely no connection. They should consider those persons as enemies to themselves and to their country. But he did not for a moment suggest that they should hate those people. The speaker was not a believer in Government, he would not have any Government. He believes that Government is the best that governs the least. But whatever his personal views were, he must say that misguided zeal that resorts to dacoities and assassinations cannot be productive of any good. These dacoities and assassinations are absolutely a foreign growth in India. They cannot take root here and cannot be a permanent institution here. History proves that assassinations have done no good. The religion of this country—the Hindu religion—is abstention from *himsa*, that is taking animal life. That is, he believes, the guiding principle of all religions. The Hindu religion says that even the evil-doer should not be hated. It says that nobody has any right to kill even the evil-doer. These assassinations are a Western institution and the speaker warned his hearers against these Western methods and Western evils. What have

they done in the Western world? If the youths imitated them and believed that they could do the slightest good to India, they were totally mistaken. He would not discuss what Government was best for India, whether the British Government or the Government that existed before, though he believed that there was a great deal of room for improvement in the British Government. But he would advise his young friends to be fearless, sincere and be guided by the principle [of religion. If they had a programme for the country, let them place it openly before the public. The speaker concluded the address with an appeal to the young men present to be religious and be guided by a spirit of religion and morality. If they were prepared to die, the speaker was prepared to die with them. He would be ready to accept their guidance. But if they wanted to terrorise the country, he should rise against them.

## LOYALTY TO THE BRITISH EMPIRE

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At the annual gathering of the Madras Law Dinner in April 1915, Mr. M. K. Gandhi was specially invited to propose the toast of the British Empire. The Hon'ble Mr. Corbet, the Advocate-General, introduced the guest. Mr. Gandhi said :

During my three months' tour in India as also in South Africa, I have been so often questioned how I, a determined opponent of modern civilization and an avowed patriot, could reconcile myself to loyalty of the British Empire of which India was such a large part; how it was possible for me to find it consistent that India and England could work together for mutual benefit. It gives me the greatest pleasure this evening at this great and important gathering to re-declare my loyalty to this British Empire and my loyalty is based upon very selfish grounds. As a passive resister, I discovered that a passive resister has to make good his claim to passive resistance no matter under what circumstances he finds himself, and I discovered that the British Empire had certain ideals with which I have fallen in love and one of those ideals is, that every subject of the British Empire has the freest scope possible for his energies and honour and whatever he thinks is due to his conscience. I think that this is true of the British Empire as it is not true of any other Government. (*Applause.*) I feel, as you here perhaps know, that I am no lover of any Government, and I have more than once said that Government is best which governs least. And I have found that it is possible for me to be governed least under the British Empire. Hence my loyalty to the British Empire. (*Loud applause.*)

## ADVICE TO STUDENTS

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Mr. Gandhi delivered the following speech at the Y. M. C. A. in reply to the Madras Students' address on April 27, 1915, the Hon. Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri presiding:

Mr. Chairman and Dear Friends,—Madras has well-nigh exhausted the English vocabulary in using adjectives of virtue with reference to my wife and myself and, if I may be called upon to give an opinion as to where I have been smothered with kindness, love and attention, I would have to say: it is Madras. (*Applause.*) But as I have said so often, I believed it of Madras. So it is no wonder to me that you are lavishing all these kindnesses with unparalleled generosity, and now the worthy president of the Servants of India Society—under which society I am going through a period of probation—has, if I may say so, capped it all. Am I worthy of these things? My answer from the innermost recesses of my heart is an emphatic “No”. But I have come to India to become worthy of every adjective that you may use, and all my life will certainly be dedicated to prove worthy of them if I am to be a worthy servant.

And so it is that you have sung that beautiful national song, on hearing which all of us sprang to our feet. The poet has lavished all the adjectives that he possibly could to describe Mother India. He describes Mother India as sweet smiling, sweet-speaking, fragrant, all-powerful, all good, truthful, land flowing with milk and honey, land having ripe fields, fruits and grains, and inhabited by a race of men of whom we have only



a picture in the great Golden Age. He pictures to us a land which shall embrace in its possession the whole of the world, the whole of humanity by the might or right not of physical power but of soul-power. Can we sing that hymn? I ask myself, "can I, by any right, spring to my feet when I listen to that song." The poet no doubt gave us a picture for our realisation, the words of which simply remain prophetic, and it is for you, the hope of India, to realise every word that the poet has said in describing this Motherland of ours. To-day I feel that these adjectives are very largely misplaced in his description of the Motherland, and it is for you and for me to make good the claim that the poet has advanced on behalf of his Motherland.

#### THE REAL EDUCATION

You, the students of Madras as well as the students all over India—are you receiving an education which will make you worthy to realise that ideal and which will draw the best out of you, or is it an education which has become a factory for making Government employees or clerks in commercial offices? Is the goal of the education that you are receiving that of mere employment whether in the Government departments or other departments? If that be the goal of your education, if that is the goal that you have set before yourselves, I feel and I fear that the vision which the poet pictured for himself is far from being realised. As you have heard me say perhaps, or as you have read, I am and I have been a determined opponent of modern civilisation. I want you to turn your eyes to-day upon what is going on in Europe and if you have come to the conclusion that Europe is to-day groaning under the heels of the modern civilization, then you and your elders will have to think

twice before you can emulate that civilisation in our Motherland. But I have been told: "How can we help it, seeing that our rulers bring that culture to our Motherland." Do not make any mistake about it at all. I do not for one moment believe that it is for any rulers to bring that culture to you unless you are prepared to accept it, and if it be that the rulers bring that culture before us, I think that we have forces within ourselves to enable us to reject that culture without having to reject the rulers themselves. (*Applause*). I have said on many a platform that the British race is with us. I decline to go into the reasons why that race is with us, but I do believe that it is possible for India if she would but live up to the traditions of the sages of whom you have heard from our worthy President, to transmit a message through this great race, a message not of physical might but a message of love. And then, it will be your privilege to conquer the conquerors not by shedding blood but by sheer force of spiritual predominance. When I consider what is going on to-day in India, I think it is necessary for us to say what our opinion is in connection with the political assassinations and political dacoities. I feel that these are purely a foreign importation which cannot take root in this land. But you the student world have to beware, lest mentally or morally you give one thought of approval to this kind of terrorism. I, as a passive resister, will give you another thing very substantial for it. Terrorise yourself; search within; by all means resist tyranny wherever you find it; by all means resist encroachment upon your liberty, but not by shedding the blood of the tyrant. That is not what is taught by our religion. Our religion is based upon *ahimsa*, which in its active form is nothing but Love, love not only

to your neighbours, not only to your friends but love even to those who may be your enemies.

One word more in connection with the same thing. I think that if we were to practise truth, to practise *ahimsa*, we must immediately see that we also practise fearlessness. If our rulers are doing what in our opinion is wrong, and if we feel it our duty to let them hear our advice even though it may be considered sedition, I urge you to speak sedition—but at your peril, you must be prepared to suffer the consequences. And when you are ready to suffer the consequences and not hit below the belt, then I think you will have made good your right to have your advice heard even by the Government.

#### RIGHTS AND DUTIES

I ally myself with the British Government, because I believe that it is possible for me to claim equal partnership with every subject of the British Empire. I to-day claim that equal partnership. I do not belong to a subject race. I do not call myself a member of a subject race. But there is this thing: it is not for the British Governors to give you; it is for you to take the thing. I want and I can take the thing. That I want only by discharging my obligations. Max Muller has told us—we need not go to Max Muller to interpret our own religion—but he says, our religion consists of four letters “D-u-t-y” and not in the five letters “R-i-g-h-t”. And if you believe that all that we want can go from better discharge of our duty, then think always of your duty and fighting along those lines; you will have no fear of any man, you will fear only God. That is the message that my master—if I may say so, your master too—Mr. Gokhale has given to us. What is that message then? It is in the constitution of the Servants of

India Society and that is the message by which I wish to be guided in my life. The message is to spiritualise the political life and the political institutions of the country. We must immediately set about realising its practice. The students cannot be away from politics. Politics is as essential to them as religion. Politics cannot be divorced from religion. My views may not be acceptable to you. I know. All the same, I can only give you what is stirring me to my very depths. On the authority of my experiences in South Africa, I claim that your countrymen who had not that modern culture but who had that strength of the Rishis of old, who have inherited the *tapascharya* performed by the Rishis, without having known a single word of English literature and without knowing anything whatsoever of the present modern culture, they are able to rise to their full height. And what has been possible for the uneducated and illiterate countrymen of ours in South Africa is ten times possible for you and for me to-day in this sacred land of ours. May that be your privilege and may that be my privilege ! (*Applause.*)

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## [THE REWARD OF PUBLIC LIFE

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In reply to the citizens' address at Bangalore presented in May 1915, Mr. Gandhi made the following speech :

I did not want to be dragged in the carriage. There is a meaning in that. Let us not spoil our public men by dragging them. Let them work silently. We should not encourage the thought that one has to work, because one will be honoured similarly. Let public men feel that they will be stoned, they will be neglected and let them still love the country; for service is its own reward. A charge has been brought against us that we as a nation are too demonstrative and lack business-like methods. We plead guilty to the charge. Are we to copy modern activities or are we to copy the ancient civilisation which has survived so many shocks? You and I have to act on the political platform from a spiritual side and if this is done, we should then conquer the conquerors. The day will dawn then, when we can consider an Englishman as a fellow-citizen. (*Cheers.*) That day will shortly come; but it may be difficult to conceive when. I have had signal opportunities of associating myself with Englishmen of character, devotion, nobility and influence. I can assure you that the present wave of activity is passing away and a new civilization is coming shortly which will be a nobler one. India is a great dependency and Mysore is a great Native State. It must be possible for you to transmit this message to British Governors and to British statesmen; the message is: "Establish a *Ram Rajya* in Mysore and have as your minister a Vasishta who will command obedience." (*Prolonged cheers.*) Then my fellow-countrymen, you can dictate terms to the conqueror. (*Prolonged cheers.*)

## HINDU UNIVERSITY SPEECH

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The following is the full text of the speech delivered on February 4th, 1916, on the occasion of the opening of the Benares Hindu University. The speech was edited by Mr. Gandhi. "In editing the speech," he wrote, "I have merely removed some of the verblage which in cold print would make the speech bad reading":

Friends, I wish to tender my humble apology for the long delay that took place before I am able to reach this place. And you will readily accept the apology when I tell you that I am not responsible for the delay nor is any human agency responsible for it. (*Laughter.*) The fact is that I am like an animal on show and my keepers in their over-kindness always manage to neglect a necessary chapter in this life and that is pure accident. In this case, they did not provide for the series of accidents that happened to us—to me, keepers, and my carriers. Hence this delay.

Friends, under the influence of the matchless eloquence of the lady (Mrs. Besant) who has just sat down, pray, do not believe that our University has become a finished product and that all the young men who are to come to the University that has yet to rise and come into existence, have also come and returned from it finished citizens of a great empire. Do not go away with any such impression and if you the student world to which my remarks are supposed to be addressed this evening, consider for one moment that the spiritual life for which this country is noted and for which this country has no rival, can be transmitted

through the lip, pray, believe me you are wrong. You will never be able merely through the lip to give the message that India, I hope, will one day deliver to the world. I myself have been "fed up" with speeches and lectures. I accept the lectures that have been delivered here during the last two days from this category, because they were necessary. But I do venture to suggest to you that we have now reached almost the end of our resources in speech-making, and it is not enough that our ears are feasted, that our eyes are feasted, but it is necessary that our hearts have got to be touched and that our hands and feet have got to be moved. We have been told during the last two days how necessary it is, if we are to retain our hold upon the simplicity of Indian character that our hands and feet should move in unison with our hearts. But this is only by way of preface. I wanted to say it is a matter of deep humiliation and shame for us that I am compelled this evening under the shadow of this great college, in this sacred city, to address my countrymen in a language that is foreign to me. I know that if I was appointed an examiner to examine all those who have been attending during these two days this series of lectures, most of those who might be examined upon these lectures would fail. And why? Because they have not been touched. I was present at the sessions of the great Congress in the month of December. There was a much vaster audience, and will you believe me when I tell you that the only speeches that touched that huge audience in Bombay were the speeches that were delivered in Hindustani? In Bombay, mind you, not in Benares where everybody speaks Hindi. But between the vernaculars of the Bombay Presidency

on the one hand, and Hindi on the other, no such great dividing line exists as there does between English and the sister languages of India; and the Congress audience was better able to follow the speakers in Hindi. I am hoping that this University will see to it that the youths who come to it will receive their instruction through the medium of their vernaculars. Our language is the reflection of ourselves, and if you tell me that our languages are too poor to express the best thought, then I say that the sooner we are wiped out of existence the better for us. Is there a man who dreams that English can ever become the national language of India? (*Cries of "Never."*) Why this handicap on the nation? Just consider for one moment what an unequal race our lads have to run with every English lad. I had the privilege of a close conversation with some Poona professors. They assured me that every Indian youth, because he reached his knowledge through the English language, lost at least six precious years of life. Multiply that by the number of students turned out by our schools and colleges and find out for yourselves how many thousand years have been lost to the nation. The charge against us is, that we have no initiative. How can we have any if we are to devote the precious years of our life to the mastery of a foreign tongue? We fail in this attempt also. Was it possible for any speaker yesterday and to-day to impress his audience as was possible for Mr. Higginbotham? It was not the fault of the previous speakers that they could not engage the audience. They had more than substance enough for us in their addresses. But their addresses could not go home to us. I have heard it said that after all it is English-educated India which is leading and which is



doing all the thing for the nation. It would be monstrous if it were otherwise. The only education we receive is English education. Surely we must show something for it. But suppose that we had been receiving during the past fifty years education through our vernaculars, what should we have to-day? We should have to-day a free India, we should have our educated men, not as if they were foreigners in their own land but speaking to the heart of the nation; they would be working amongst the poorest of the poor, and whatever they would have gained during the past 50 years would be a heritage for the nation. (*Applause.*) To-day even our wives are not the sharers in our best thought. Look at Professor Bose and Professor Ray and their brilliant researches. Is it not a shame that their researches are not the common property of the masses?

Let us now turn to another subject.

The Congress has passed a resolution about self-government and I have no doubt that the All-India Congress Committee and the Moslem League will do their duty and come forward with some tangible suggestions. But I, for one, must frankly confess that I am not so much interested in what they will be able to produce as I am interested in anything that the student world is going to produce or the masses are going to produce. No paper contribution will ever give us self-government. No amount of speeches will ever make us fit for self-government. It is only our conduct that will fit us for it. (*Applause.*) And how are we trying to govern ourselves? I want to think audibly this evening. I do not want to make a speech and if you find me this evening speaking without reserve, pray, consider that you are only sharing the thoughts of a

man who allows himself to think audibly, and if you think that I seem to transgress the limits that courtesy imposes upon me, pardon me for the liberty I may be taking. I visited the Viswanath temple last evening and as I was walking through those lanes, these were the thoughts that touched me. If a stranger dropped from above on to this great temple and he had to consider what we as Hindus were, would he not be justified in condemning us? Is not this great temple a reflection of our own character? I speak feelingly as a Hindu. Is it right that the lanes of our sacred temple should be as dirty as they are? The houses round about are built anyhow. The lanes are tortuous and narrow. If even our temples are not models of roominess and cleanliness, what can our self-government be? Shall our temples be abodes of holiness, cleanliness and peace as soon as the English have retired from India, either of their own pleasure or by compulsion, bag and baggage?

I entirely agree with the President of the Congress that before we think of self-government, we shall have to do the necessary plodding. In every city there are two divisions, the cantonment and the city proper. The city mostly is a stinking den. But we are a people unused to city life. But if we want city life, we cannot reproduce the easy going hamlet life. It is not comforting to think that people walk about the streets of Indian Bombay under the perpetual fear of dwellers in the storeyed buildings spitting upon them. I do a great deal of Railway travelling. I observe the difficulty of third class passengers. But the Railway Administration is by no means to blame for all their hard lot. We do not know the elementary laws of cleanliness. We spit anywhere on the carriage floor, irrespective

of the thought that it is often used as sleeping space. We do not trouble ourselves as to how we use it; the result is indescribable filth in the compartment. The so-called better class passengers overawe their less fortunate brethren. Among them I have seen the student world also. Sometimes they behave no better. They can speak English and they have worn Norfolk jackets and therefore claim the right to force their way in and command seating accommodation. I have turned the searchlight all over and as you have given me the privilege of speaking to you. I am laying my heart bare. Surely we must set these things right in our progress towards self-government. I now introduce you to another scene. His Highness the Maharajah who presided yesterday over our deliberations, spoke about the poverty of India. Other speakers laid great stress upon it. But what did we witness in the great pandal in which the foundation ceremony was performed by the Viceroy. Certainly a most gorgeous show, an exhibition of jewellery which made a splendid feast for the eyes of the greatest jeweller who chose to come from Paris. I compare with the richly bedecked noblemen the millions of the poor. And I feel like saying to these noblemen: "There is no salvation for India unless you strip yourselves of this jewellery and hold it in trust for your countrymen in India." (*Hear, hear and applause.*) I am sure it is not the desire of the King-Emperor or Lord Hardinge that in order to show the truest loyalty to our King-Emperor, it is necessary for us to ransack our jewellery-boxes and to appear bedecked from top to toe. I would undertake at the peril of my life to bring to you a message from King George himself that he expects nothing of the kind.

Sir, whenever I hear of a great palace rising in any great city of India, be it in British India or be it in India which is ruled by our great chiefs, I become jealous at once and I say: "Oh, it is the money that has come from the agriculturists." Over 75 per cent. of the population are agriculturists and Mr. Higginbotham told us last night in his own felicitous language that they are the men who grow two blades of grass in the place of one. But there cannot be much spirit of self-government about us if we take away or allow others to take away from them almost the whole of the results of their labour. Our salvation can only come through the farmer. Neither the lawyers, nor the doctors, nor the rich landlords are going to secure it.

Now, last but not the least, it is my bounden duty to refer to what agitated our minds during these two or three days. All of us have had many anxious moments while the Viceroy was going through the streets of Benares. There were detectives stationed in many places. We were horrified. We asked ourselves: "Why this distrust? Is it not better that even Lord Hardinge should die than live a living death? But a representative of a mighty Sovereign may not. He might find it necessary even to live a living death. But why was it necessary to impose these detectives on us? We may foam, we may fret, we may resent but let us not forget that India of to-day in her impatience has produced an army of anarchists. I myself am an anarchist, but of another type. But there is a class of anarchists amongst us, and if I was able to reach this class, I would say to them that their anarchism has no room in India if India is to conquer the conqueror. It is a sign of fear. If we trust and fear God, we shall have to fear no one, not Maharajahs, not Viceroys, not the detectives, not even King George. I honour the

anarchist for his love of the country. I honour him for his bravery in being willing to die for his country; but I ask him: Is killing honourable? Is the dagger of an assassin a fit precursor of an honourable death? I deny it. There is no warrant for such methods in any scriptures. If I found it necessary for the salvation of India that the English should retire, that they should be driven out, I would not hesitate to declare that they would have to go, and I hope I would be prepared to die in defence of that belief. That would, in my opinion, be an honourable death. The bomb-thrower creates secret plots, is afraid to come out into the open, and when caught pays the penalty of misdirected zeal. I have been told: "Had we not done this, had some people not thrown bombs, we should never have gained what we have got with reference to the partition movement." (Mrs. Besant: Please stop it). This was what I said in Bengal when Mr. Lyon presided at the meeting. I think what I am saying is necessary. If I am told to stop I shall obey. (*Turning to the Chairman*) I await your orders. If you consider that by my speaking as I am, I am not serving the country and the empire, I shall certainly stop. (*Cries of "Go on."*) (*The Chairman: Please explain your object.*) I am explaining my object. I am simply (*another interruption*). My friends, please do not resent this interruption. If Mrs. Besant this evening suggests that I should stop, she does so because she loves India so well, and she considers that I am erring in thinking audibly before you young men. But even so, I simply say this that I want to purge India of the atmosphere of suspicion on either side; if we are to reach our goal, we should have an empire which is to be based upon mutual love and mutual trust. Is it not better

that we talk under the shadow of this college than that we should be talking irresponsibly in our homes? I consider that it is much better that we talk these things openly. I have done so with excellent results before now. I know that there is nothing that the students are not discussing. There is nothing that the students do not know. I am therefore turning the searchlight towards ourselves. I hold the name of my country so dear to me that I exchange these thoughts with you and submit to you that there is no reason for anarchism in India. Let us frankly and openly say whatever we want to say to our rulers and face the consequences if what we have to say does not please them. But let us not abuse. I was talking the other day to a member of the much-abused Civil Service. I have not very much in common with the members of that Service, but I could not help admiring the manner in which he was speaking to me. He said: "Mr. Gandhi, do you for one moment suppose that all we, Civil Servants, are a bad lot, that we want to oppress the people whom we have come to govern?" "No," I said. "Then, if you get an opportunity put in a word for the much-abused Civil Service?" And I am here to put in that word. Yes; many members of the Indian Civil Service are most decidedly overbearing; they are tyrannical, at times thoughtless. Many other adjectives may be used. I grant all these things and I grant also that after having lived in India for a certain number of years, some of them become somewhat degraded. But what does that signify? They were gentlemen before they came here, and if they have lost some of the moral fibre, it is a reflection upon ourselves. (*Cries of "No".*) Just think out for yourselves, if a man who was good yesterday has become bad after having come in contact with me, is he responsible that he

has deteriorated or am I? The atmosphere of sycophancy and falsity that surrounds them on their coming to India demoralises them as it would many of us. It is well to take the blame sometimes. If we are to receive self-government, we shall have to take it. We shall never be granted self-government. Look at the history of the British Empire and the British nation ; freedom-loving as it is, it will not be a party to give freedom to a people who will not take it themselves. Learn your lesson if you wish to from the Boer War. Those who were enemies of that empire only a few years ago have now become friends.

[ At this point there was an interruption and there was a movement on the platform to leave ; the speech therefore ended here abruptly.]

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## THE AWAKENING OF INDIA

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In reply to the welcome address presented by the Citizens' Association, Karachi, on February 29, 1916, Mr. Gandhi spoke in Hindi to the following effect:

I have been travelling in various parts of India, and in the course of my travels I have been struck with the fact that throughout India the hearts of the people are in a special degree drawn towards me. All brothers of Hindustan without distinction of creed or caste have been showing this attachment. But I feel convinced that this remarkable attachment to me is meant not for me but as a fitting tribute of admiration to all those noble brothers and sisters of ours in South Africa, who underwent such immense trouble and sacrifices including incarceration in jails for the service of the Motherland. It is undoubtedly this consideration which leads you to be so very kind to me. It was they who won the struggle and it was by reason of their unflinching determination to "do or die" that so much was achieved. Hence I take it that whatever tribute is paid to me, is in reality and in truth paid to them.

In the course of my tour in India, I have been particularly struck with one thing and that is the awakening of the Indian people. A new hope has filled the hearts of the people, hope that something is going to happen which will raise the Motherland to a higher status. But side by side with this spirit of hope I also had amongst my countrymen, awe not only of the Government but also of heads of castes and the priestly class. As a result of this we are afraid to speak out what is in us. So long as this spirit remains, there will be, and there can be, no true progress. You know that at the last session of the Congress a resolution was passed about self-government. For the attainment of that ideal



you and I, all of us, must work and persevere. In pursuance of that resolution, the Committees of the Congress and the Moslem League will soon meet together and they will decide what they think proper. But the attainment of self-government depends not on their saying or doing anything but upon what you and I do. Here in Karachi commerce is predominant and there are many big merchants. To them I wish to address a few words. It is a misapprehension to think that there is no scope in commerce for serving the Mother-country. If they are inspired by the spirit of truth, merchants can be immensely useful to the country. The salvation of our country, remember, is not in the hands of others but of ourselves, and more in the hands of merchants in some respects than the educated people; for I strongly feel that so long as there is no *swadeshim* there can be no self-government (*hear, hear*), and for the spread of *swadeshim* Indian merchants are in a position to do a very great deal. The *swadeshi* wave passed through the country at one time. But I understand that the movement had collapsed largely because Indian merchants had palmed on foreign goods as *swadeshi* articles. By Indian merchants being honest and straightforward in their business, they could achieve a great deal for the regeneration and uplift of the country. Hence merchants should faithfully observe what Hindus call *dharma* and Muhammadans call *iman* in their business transactions. Then shall India be uplifted. In South Africa, our merchants rendered valuable help in the struggle, and yet because some of them weakened, the struggle was prolonged somewhat. It is the duty of the educated classes to mix freely with Indian merchants and the poor classes. Then will our journey to the common and cherished goal be less irksome. (*Prolonged applause.*)

## THE GURUKULA

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The following is the text of Mr. Gandhi's speech at the anniversary of the Gurukula, as written out by himself:

I propose to reproduce only as much of it as in my opinion is worth placing on record with additions where they may be found necessary. The speech, it may be observed, was delivered in Hindi. After thanking Mahatmaji Munshi Ram for his great kindness to my boys to whom he gave shelter on two occasions and acted as father to them and after stating that the time for action had arrived rather than for speeches, I proceeded: I owe a debt of gratitude to the Arya Samaj. I have often derived inspiration from its activity. I have noticed among the members of the Samaj much self-sacrifice. During my travels in India, I came across many Arya Samajists who were doing excellent work for the country. I am therefore grateful to Mahatmaji, that I am enabled to be in your midst. At the same time it is but fair to state that I am frankly a Sanatanist. For me Hinduism is all-sufficing. Every variety of belief finds protection under its ample fold. And though the Arya Samajists and the Sikhs and the Brahmo Samajists may choose to be classed differently from the Hindus, I have no doubt that at no distant future they will be all merged in Hinduism and find in it their fulness. Hinduism, like every other human institution, has its drawbacks and its defects. Here is ample scope for any worker to strive for reform, but there is little cause for succession.

### SPIRIT OF FEARLESSNESS

Throughout my travels I have been asked about the immediate need for India. And perhaps I would not do better than repeat this afternoon the answer I have given elsewhere. In general terms a proper religious spirit is the

greatest and most immediate need. But I know that this is too general an answer to satisfy anybody. And it is an answer true for all time. What therefore I desire to say is, that owing to the religious spirit being dormant in us, we are living in a state of perpetual fear. We fear the temporal as well as the spiritual authority. We dare not speak out our minds before our priests and our *Pandits*. We stand in awe of the temporal power. I am sure that in so doing we do a disservice to them and us. Neither the spiritual teachers nor our political governors could possibly desire that we should hide the truth from them. Lord Willingdon, speaking to a Bombay audience, has been saying recently that he had observed that we hesitated to say "No" when we really meant it and advised his audience to cultivate a fearless spirit. Of course, fearlessness should never mean want of due respect or regard for the feelings of others. In my humble opinion fearlessness is the first thing indispensable before we could achieve anything permanent and real. This quality is unattainable without religious consciousness. Let us fear God and we shall cease to fear man. If we grasp the fact that there is a divinity within us which witnesses everything we think or do and which protects us and guides us along the true path, it is clear that we shall cease to have any other fear on the face of the earth save the fear of God. Loyalty to the Governor of governors supersedes all other loyalty and gives an intelligent basis to the latter.

#### MEANING OF SWADESHI

And when we have sufficiently cultivated this spirit of fearlessness, we shall see that there is no salvation for us without true *swadeshi*, not the *swadeshi* which can be conveniently put off. *Swadeshi* for me has a deeper meaning. I would like us to apply it in our religious,

political and economic life. It is not therefore merely confined to wearing on occasions a *swadeshi* cloth. That we have to do for all time, not out of a spirit of jealousy or revenge but because it is a duty we owe to our dear country. We commit a breach of the *swadeshi* spirit certainly if we wear foreign-made cloth, but we do so also if we adopt the foreign cut. Surely the style of our dress has some correspondence with our environment. In elegance and tastefulness it is immeasurably superior to the trousers and the jacket. An Indian wearing a shirt flowing over his pyjamas with a waist-coat on it without a necktie and its flaps hanging loose behind is not a very graceful spectacle. *Swadeshi* in religion teaches one to measure the glorious past and re-enact it in the present generation. The pandemonium that is going on in Europe shows that modern civilization represents forces of evil and darkness, whereas the ancient, *i.e.*, Indian civilization, represents in its essence the divine force. Modern civilization is chiefly materialistic as ours is chiefly spiritual. Modern civilization occupies itself in the investigation of the laws of matter and employs the human ingenuity in inventing or discovering means of production and weapons of destruction; ours is chiefly occupied in exploring spiritual laws. Our *Shastras* lay down unequivocally that a proper observance of truth, chastity, scrupulous regard for all life, abstention from coveting others' possessions and refusal to hoard anything but what is necessary for our daily wants is indispensable for a right life; that without it a knowledge of the divine element is an impossibility. Our civilization tells us with daring certainty that a proper and perfect cultivation of the quality of *ahimsa* which, in its active form means purest love and pity,

brings the whole world to our feet. The author of this discovery gives a wealth of illustration which carries conviction with it.

#### THE DOCTRINE OF AHIMSA

Examine its result in the political life. 'There is no gift so valued by our *Shastras* as the gift of life. Consider what our relations would be with our rulers if we gave absolute security of life to them. If they could but feel that, no matter what we might feel about their acts, we would hold their bodies as sacred as our own, there would immediately spring up an atmosphere of mutual trust, and there would be such frankness on either side as to pave the way for an honourable and just solution of many problems that worry us to-day. It should be remembered that in practising *ahimsa*, there need not be any reciprocation though, as a matter of fact, in its final stages it commands reciprocation. Many of us believe, and I am one of them, that through our civilization we have a message to deliver to the world. I tender my loyalty to the British Government quite selfishly. I would like to use the British race for transmitting this mighty message of *ahimsa* to the whole world. But that can only be done when we have conquered our so-called conquerors, and you, my Arya Samaj friends, are perhaps specially elected for this mission. You claim to examine our scriptures critically. You take nothing for granted and you claim not to fear to reduce your belief to practice. I do not think that there is any room for trifling with or limiting the doctrine of *ahimsa*. You dare then to reduce it to practice regardless of immediate consequences which would certainly test the strength of your convictions. You would not only have produced salvation for India, but you would

have rendered the noblest service that a man can render to humanity—a service moreover which you would rightly assert, the great *Sirami* was born for. This *swadeshi* is to be considered as a very active force to be ceaselessly employed with an ever-increasing vigilance, searching self-examination. It is not meant for the lazy, but it is essentially meant for them who would gladly lay down their lives for the sake of truth. It is possible to dilate upon several other phases of *swadeshi*, but I think I have said enough to enable you to understand what I mean. I only hope that you who represent a school of reformers in India, will not reject what I have said without a thorough examination. And if my word has commended itself to you, your past record entitles me to expect you to enforce in your own lives the things of eternity about which I have ventured to speak to you this afternoon and cover the whole of India with your activity.

#### WORK OF THE ARYA SAMAJ

In concluding my report of the above speech, I would like to state what I did not in speaking to that great audience and it is this. I have now twice visited the Gurukula. In spite of some vital differences with my brethren of the Arya Samaj, I have a sneaking regard for them, and it, and perhaps the best result of the activity of the Arya Samaj is to be seen in the establishment and the conduct of the Gurukula. Though it depends for its vitality entirely upon the inspiring presence of Mahatmaji Munshiram, it is truly a national and self-governing and self-governed institution. It is totally independent of Government aid or patronage. Its war chest is filled not out of monies received from the privileged few, but from the poor many who make it a

point of honor from year to year to make a pilgrimage to Kangri and willingly give their mite for maintaining this National College. Here at every anniversary a huge crowd gathers and the manner in which it is handled, housed and fed evinces no mean power of organisation. But the most wonderful thing about it all is that the crowd consisting of about ten thousand men, women and children, is managed without the assistance of a single policeman and without any fuss or semblance of force, the only force that subsists between the crowd and the managers of the institution is that of love and mutual esteem. Fourteen years are nothing in the life of a big institution like this. What the collegiates who have been just turned out during the last two or three years will be able to show, remains to be seen. The public will not and cannot judge men or institutions except through the results that they show. It makes no allowance for failures. It is a most exacting judge. The final appeal of the Gurukula, as of all popular institutions, must be to this judge. Great responsibility therefore rests upon the shoulders of the students who have been discharged from the College and who have entered upon the thorny path of life. Let them beware. Meanwhile those who are well-wishers of this great experiment, may derive satisfaction from the fact that we have it as an indisputable rule of life that as the tree is, so will the fruit be. The tree looks lovely enough. He who waters it is a noble soul. Why worry about what the fruit is likely to be?

#### INDUSTRIAL TRAINING

As a lover of the Gurukula, I may be permitted to offer one or two suggestions to the Committee and the parents. The Gurukula boys need a thorough industrial

training if they are to become self-reliant and self-supporting. It seems to me that in our country in which 85 per cent. of the population is agricultural and perhaps 10 per cent. occupied in supplying the wants of the peasantry, it must be part of the training of every youth that he has a fair practical knowledge of agriculture and hand-weaving. He will lose nothing if he knows a proper use of tools, can saw a piece of board straight and build a wall that will not come down through a faulty handling of the plumber's line. A boy who is thus equipped, will never feel helpless in battling with the world and never be in want of employment. A knowledge of the laws of hygiene and sanitation, as well as the art of rearing children, should also form a necessary part of the Gurukula lads. The sanitary arrangements at the fair left much to be desired. The plague of flies told its own tale. These irrepressible sanitary inspectors incessantly warned us that in point of sanitation all was not well with us. They plainly suggested that the remains of our food and excreta need to be properly buried. It seemed to me to be such a pity that a golden opportunity was being missed of giving to the annual visitors practical lessons on sanitation. But the work must begin with the boys. Thus the management would have at the annual gathering three hundred practical sanitary teachers. Last but not least, let the parents and the committee not spoil their lads by making them ape European dress or modern luxuries. These will hinder them in their after life and are antagonistic to Bramacharya. They have enough to fight against in the evil inclinations common to us all. Let us not make their fight more difficult by adding to their temptations.



## SWADESHI

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The following is an address delivered before the Missionary Conference, Madras, on the 14th February 1916 :

It was not without great diffidence that I undertook to speak to you at all. And I was hard put to it in the selection of my subject. I have chosen a very delicate and difficult subject. It is delicate because of the peculiar views I hold upon *Swadeshi*, and it is difficult because I have not that command of language which is necessary for giving adequate expression to my thoughts. I know that I may rely upon your indulgence for the many shortcomings you will no doubt find in my address, the more so when I tell you that there is nothing in what I am about to say that I am not either already practising or am not preparing to practise to the best of my ability. It encourages me to observe that last month you devoted a week to prayer in the place of an address. I have earnestly prayed that what I am about to say may bear fruit, and I know that you will bless my word with a similar prayer.

After much thinking I have arrived at a definition of *Swadeshi* that, perhaps, best illustrates my meaning. *Swadeshi* is that spirit in us which restricts us to the use and service of our immediate surroundings to the exclusion of the more remote. Thus, as for religion, in order to satisfy the requirements of the definition, I must restrict myself to my ancestral religion. That is the use of my immediate religious surrounding. If I find it defective, I should serve it by purging it of its defects. In the domain of politics I should make use of the indigenous institutions and serve them by curing them of their proved defects. In

that of economics I should use only things that are produced by my immediate neighbours and serve those industries by making them efficient and complete where they might be found wanting. It is suggested that such *Swadeshi*, if reduced to practice, will lead to the millennium, because we do not expect quite to reach it within our times, so may we not abandon *Swadeshi* even though it may not be fully attained for generations to come.

Let us briefly examine the three branches of *Swadeshi* as sketched above. Hinduism has become a conservative religion and, therefore, a mighty force because of the *Swadeshi* spirit underlying it. It is the most tolerant because it is non-proselytising, and it is as capable of expansion to-day as it has been found to be in the past. It has succeeded not in driving out, as I think it has been erroneously held, but in absorbing Buddhism. By reason of the *Swadeshi* spirit, a Hindu refuses to change his religion, not necessarily because he considers it to be the best, but because he knows that he can complement it by introducing reforms. And what I have said about Hinduism is, I suppose, true of the other great faiths of the world, only it is held that it is specially so in the case of Hinduism. But here comes the point I am labouring to reach. If there is any substance in what I have said, will not the great missionary bodies of India, to whom she owes a deep debt of gratitude for what they have done and are doing, do still better and serve the spirit of Christianity better by dropping the goal of proselytising while continuing their philanthropic work? I hope you will not consider this to be an impertinence on my part. I make the suggestion in all sincerity and with due humility. Moreover I have some

claim upon your attention. I have endeavoured to study the Bible. I consider it as part of my scriptures. The spirit of the Sermon on the Mount competes almost on equal terms with the Bhagavad Gita for the domination of my heart. I yield to no Christian in the strength of devotion with which I sing "Lead kindly light" and several other inspired hymns of a similar nature. I have come under the influence of noted Christian missionaries belonging to different denominations. And I enjoy to this day the privilege of friendship with some of them. You will perhaps, therefore, allow that I have offered the above suggestion not as a biased Hindu, but as a humble and impartial student of religion with great leanings towards Christianity. May it not be that "Go ye unto all the world" message has been somewhat narrowly interpreted and the spirit of it missed? It will not be denied, I speak from experience, that many of the conversions are only so-called. In some cases the appeal has gone not to the heart but to the stomach. And in every case a conversion leaves a sore behind it which, I venture to think, is avoidable. Quoting again from experience, a new birth, a change of heart, is perfectly possible in every one of the great faiths. I know I am now treading upon thin ice. But I do not apologise in closing this part of my subject for saying that the frightful outrage that is just going on in Europe, perhaps shows that the message of Jesus of Nazareth, the Son of Peace, had been little understood in Europe, and that light upon it may have to be thrown from the East.

I have sought your help in religious matters which it is yours to give in a special sense. But I make bold to seek it even in political matters. I do not believe that religion has nothing to do with politics. The latter

divorced from religion is like a corpse only fit to be buried. As a matter of fact, in your own silent manner, you influence politics not a little. And I feel that, if the attempt to separate politics from religion had not been made as it is even now made, they would not have degenerated as they often appear to have done. No one considers that the political life of the country is in a happy state. Following out the *Swadeshi* spirit, I observe the indigenous institutions and the village *panchayats* hold me. India is really a republican country, and it is because it is that, that it has survived every shock hitherto delivered. Princes and potentates, whether they were Indian born or foreigners, have hardly touched the vast masses except for collecting revenue. The latter in their turn seem to have rendered unto Caesar what was Caesar's and for the rest have done much as they have liked. The vast organisation of caste answered not only the religious wants of the community but it answered to its political needs. The villagers managed their internal affairs through the caste system, and through it they dealt with any oppression from the ruling power or powers. It is not possible to deny of a nation that was capable of producing from the caste system its wonderful power of organisation. One had but to attend the great Kumbha Mela at Hardwar last year to know how skilful that organisation must have been which, without any seeming effort, was able effectively to cater for more than a million pilgrims. Yet it is the fashion to say that we lack organising ability. This is true, I fear, to a certain extent, of those who have been nurtured in the new traditions. We have laboured under a terrible handicap owing to an almost fatal departure from the *Swadeshi* spirit. We, the educated

classes, have received our education through a foreign tongue. We have therefore not reacted upon the masses. We want to represent the masses, but we fail. They recognise us not much more than they recognise the English officers. Their hearts are an open book to neither. Their aspirations are not ours. Hence there is a break. And you witness not in reality failure to organise but want of correspondence between the representatives and the represented. If during the last fifty years we had been educated through the vernaculars, our elders and our servants and our neighbours would have partaken of our knowledge; the discoveries of a Bose or a Ray would have been household treasures as are the Ramayan and the Mahabharat. As it is, so far as the masses are concerned, those great discoveries might as well have been made by foreigners. Had instruction in all the branches of learning been given through the vernaculars, I make bold to say that they would have been enriched wonderfully. The question of village sanitation, etc., would have been solved long ago. The village *panchayats* would be now a living force in a special way, and India would almost be enjoying self-government suited to its requirements, and would have been spared the humiliating spectacle of organised assassination on its sacred soil. It is not too late to mend. And you can help if you will, as no other body or bodies can.

And now for the last division of *Swadeshi*. Much of the deep poverty of the masses is due to the ruinous departure from *Swadeshi* in the economic and industrial life. If not an article of commerce had been brought from outside India, she would be to-day a land flowing with milk and honey. But that was not to be. We were greedy and so was England. The connection between

England and India was based clearly upon an error. But she does not remain in India in error. It is her declared policy that India is to be held in trust for her people. If this be true, Lancashire must stand aside. And if the *Swadeshi* doctrine is a sound doctrine, Lancashire can stand aside without hurt, though it may sustain a shock for the time being. I think of *Swadeshi* not as a boycott movement undertaken by way of revenge. I conceive it as a religious principle to be followed by all. I am no economist, but I have read some treatises which show that England could easily become a self-sustained country, growing all the produce she needs. This may be an utterly ridiculous proposition, and perhaps the best proof that it cannot be true, is that England is one of the largest importers in the world. But India cannot live for Lancashire or any other country before she is able to live for herself. And she can live for herself only if she produces and is helped to produce everything for her requirements within her own borders. She need not be, she ought not to be, drawn into the vortex of mad and ruinous competition which breeds fratricide, jealousy and many other evils. But who is to stop her great millionaires from entering into the world competition? Certainly not legislation. Force of public opinion, proper education, however, can do a great deal in the desired direction. The hand-loom industry is in a dying condition. I took special care during my wanderings last year to see as many weavers as possible, and my heart ached to find how they had lost, how families had retired from this once flourishing and honourable occupation. If we follow the *Swadeshi* doctrine, it would be your duty and mine to find out neighbours who can supply our wants and to teach them to supply them where they do not know how to proceed,

assuming that there are neighbours who are in want of healthy occupation. Then every village of India will almost be a self-supporting and self-contained unit, exchanging only such necessary commodities with other villages where they are not locally producible. This may all sound nonsensical. Well, India is a country of nonsense. It is nonsensical to parch one's throat with thirst when a kindly Mahomedan is ready to offer pure water to drink. And yet thousands of Hindus would rather die of thirst than drink water from a Mahomedan household. These nonsensical men can also, once they are convinced that their religion demands that they should wear garments manufactured in India only and eat food only grown in India, decline to wear any other clothing or eat any other food. Lord Curzon set the fashion for tea-drinking. And that pernicious drug now bids fair to overwhelm the nation. It has already undermined the digestive apparatus of hundreds of thousands of men and women and constitutes an additional tax upon their slender purses. Lord Hardinge can set the fashion for *Swadeshi*, and almost the whole of India forswear foreign goods. There is a verse in the Bhagavad Gita which, freely rendered, means masses follow the classes. It is easy to undo the evil if the thinking portion of the community were to take the *Swadeshi* vow, even though it may for a time cause considerable inconvenience. I hate legislative interference in any department of life. At best it is the lesser evil. But I would tolerate, welcome, indeed, plead for a stiff protective duty upon foreign goods. Natal, a British colony, protected its sugar by taxing the sugar that came from another British colony, Mauritius. England has sinned against India by forcing

free trade upon her. It may have been food for her, but it has been poison for this country.

It has often been urged that India cannot adopt *Swadeshi* in the economic life at any rate. Those who advance this objection do not look upon *Swadeshi* as a rule of life. With them it is a mere patriotic effort not to be made if it involved any self-denial. *Swadeshi*, as defined here, is a religious discipline to be undergone in utter disregard of the physical discomfort it may cause to individuals. Under its spell the deprivation of a pin or a needle, because these are not manufactured in India, need cause no terror. A *Swadeshist* will learn to do without hundreds of things which to-day he considers necessary. Moreover, those who dismiss *Swadeshi* from their minds by arguing the impossible, forget that *Swadeshi*, after all, is a goal to be reached by steady effort. And we would be making for the goal even if we confined *Swadeshi* to a given set of articles allowing ourselves as a temporary measure to use such things as might not be procurable in the country.

There now remains for me to consider one more objection that has been raised against *Swadeshi*. The objectors consider it to be a most selfish doctrine without any warrant in the civilized code of morality. With them to practise *Swadeshi* is to revert to barbarism. I cannot enter into a detailed analysis of the proposition. But I would urge that *Swadeshi* is the only doctrine consistent with the law of humility and love. It is arrogance to think of launching out to serve the whole of India when I am hardly able to serve even my own family. It were better to concentrate my effort upon the family and consider that through them I was serving the whole nation and, if you will, the whole of humanity. This is humility



and it is love. The motive will determine the quality of the act. I may serve my family regardless of the sufferings I may cause to others. As, for instance, I may accept an employment which enables me to extort money from people, I enrich myself thereby and then satisfy many unlawful demands of the family. Here I am neither serving the family nor the State. Or I may recognise that God has given me hands and feet only to work with for my sustenance and for that of those who may be dependent upon me. I would then at once simplify my life and that of those whom I can directly reach. In this instance I would have served the family without causing injury to anyone else. Supposing that every one followed this mode of life, we should have at once an ideal state. All will not reach that state at the same time. But those of us who, realising its truth, enforce it in practice, will clearly anticipate and accelerate the coming of that happy day. Under this plan of life, in seeming to serve India to the exclusion of every other country, I do not harm any other country. My patriotism is both exclusive and inclusive. It is exclusive in the sense that in all humility I confine my attention to the land of my birth, but it is inclusive in the sense that my service is not of a competitive or antagonistic nature. *Sic utere tuo ut alienum non la* is not merely a legal maxim, but it is a grand doctrine of life. It is the key to a proper practice of *Ahimsa* or love. It is for you, the custodians of a great faith, to set the fashion and show by your preaching, sanctified by practice, that patriotism based on hatred "killeth" and that patriotism based on love "giveth life".

## AHIMSA

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The following letter from the pen of Mr. Gandhi appeared in the *Modern Review* for October, 1916:

There seems to be no historical warrant for the belief that an exaggerated practice of *Ahimsa* synchronised with our becoming bereft of manly virtues. During the past 1,500 years we have, as a nation, given ample proof of physical courage, but we have been torn by internal dissensions and have been dominated by love of self instead of love of country. We have, that is to say, been swayed by the spirit of irreligion rather than of religion.

I do not know how far the charge of unmanliness can be made good against the Jains. I hold no brief for them. By birth I am a Vaishnavite and was taught *Ahimsa* in my childhood. I have derived much religious benefit from Jain religious works as I have from scriptures of the other great faiths of the world. I owe much to the living company of the deceased philosopher, Rajachand Kavi who was a Jain by birth. Thus though my views on *Ahimsa* are a result of my study of most of the faiths of the world, they are now no longer dependent upon the authority of these works. They are a part of my life, and if I suddenly discovered that the religious books read by me bore a different interpretation from the one I had learnt to give them, I should still hold to the view of *Ahimsa* as I am about to set forth here.

Our *Shastras* seem to teach that a man who really practises *Ahimsa* in its fulness has the world at his feet; he so affects his surroundings that even the snakes and other venomous reptiles do him no harm. This

is said to have been the experience of St. Francis of Assisi.

In its negative form, it means not injuring any living being whether by body or mind. It may not, therefore, hurt the person of any wrong-doer or bear any ill-will to him and so cause him mental suffering. This statement does not cover suffering caused to the wrong-doer by natural acts of mine which do not proceed from ill-will. It, therefore, does not prevent me from withdrawing from his presence a child whom he, we shall imagine, is about to strike. Indeed, the proper practice of *Ahimsa* requires me to withdraw the intended victim from the wrong-doer, if am in any way whatsoever the guardian of such a child. It was therefore most proper for the passive resisters of South Africa to have resisted the evil that the Union Government sought to do to them. They bore no ill-will to it. They showed this by helping the Government whenever it needed their help. "Their resistance consisted of disobedience of the orders of the Government even to the extent of suffering death at their hands." *Ahimsa* requires deliberate self-suffering, not a deliberate injuring of the supposed wrong-doer.

In its positive form, *Ahimsa* means the largest love, the greatest charity. If I am a follower of *Ahimsa*, I *must love* my enemy. I must apply the same rules to the wrong-doer who is my enemy or a stranger to me as I would to my wrong-doing father or son. This active *Ahimsa* necessarily includes truth and fearlessness. As man cannot deceive the loved one, he does not fear or frighten him or her. Gift of life is the greatest of all gifts; a man who gives it in reality, disarms all hostility. He has paved the way for an honourable

understanding. And none who is himself subject to fear can bestow that gift. He must therefore be himself fearless. A man cannot then practise *Ahimsa* and be a coward at the same time. The practice of *Ahimsa* calls forth the greatest courage. It is the most soldierly of a soldier's virtues. General Gordon has been represented in a famous statue as bearing only a stick. This takes us far on the road to *Ahimsa*. But a soldier who needs the protection of even a stick, is to that extent so much the less a soldier. He is the true soldier who knows how to die and stand his ground in the midst of a hail of bullets. Such a one was Ambarisha, who stood his ground without lifting a finger though Duryasa did his worst. The Moors who were being pounded by the French gunners and who rushed to the guns' mouths with "Allah" on their lips, showed much the same type of courage. Only theirs was the courage of desperation. Ambarisha's was due to love. Yet the Moorish valour, readiness to die, conquered the gunners. They frantically waved their hats, ceased firing, and greeted their erstwhile enemies as comrades. And so the South African passive resisters in their thousands were ready to die rather than sell their honour for a little personal ease. This was *Ahimsa* in its active form. It never barter away honour. A helpless girl in the hands of a follower of *Ahimsa* finds better and surer protection than in the hands of one who is prepared to defend her only to the point to which his weapons would carry him. The tyrant, in the first instance, will have to walk to his victim over the dead body of her defender; in the second he has but to overpower the defender; for it is assumed that the canon of propriety in the second instance will be satisfied.

when the defender has fought to the extent of his physical valour. In the first instance, as the defender has matched his very soul against the mere body of the tyrant, the odds are that the soul in the latter will be awakened and the girl would stand an infinitely greater chance of her honour being protected than in any other conceivable circumstance, barring of course that of her own personal courage.

If we are unmanly to-day, we are so, not because we do not know how to strike but because we fear to die. He is no follower of Mahavira, the apostle of Jainism, or of Buddha or of the Vedas who, being afraid to die, takes flight before any danger, real or imaginary, all the while wishing that somebody else would remove the danger by destroying the person causing it. He is no follower of *Ahimsa* who does not care a straw if he kills a man by inches by deceiving him in trade, or who would protect by force of arms a few cows and make away with the butcher or who, in order to do a supposed good to his country, does not mind killing off a few officials. All these are actuated by hatred, cowardice and fear. Here the love of the cow or the country is a vague thing intended to satisfy one's vanity or soothe a stinging conscience.

*Ahimsa*, truly understood, is in my humble opinion a panacea for all evils mundane and extra-mundane. We can never overdo it. Just at present we are not doing it at all. *Ahimsa* does not displace the practice of other virtues, but renders their practice imperatively necessary before it can be practised even in its rudiments. Mahavira and Buddha were soldiers, and so was Tolstoy. Only they saw deeper and truer into their profession and found the secret of a true, happy, honourable and godly life. Let us be joint sharers with these teachers, and this land of ours will once more be the abode of gods.

## ECONOMIC *VERSUS* MORAL PROGRESS

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The following is a lecture delivered by Mr. Gandhi at a meeting of the Muir Central College Economic Society, held at Allahabad, on Friday, 22nd December 1916 :

Does economic progress clash with real progress? By economic progress, I take it, we mean material advancement without limit, and by real progress we mean moral progress which again is the same thing as progress of the permanent element in us. The subject may therefore be stated thus : Does not moral progress increase in the same proportion as material progress? I know that this is a wider proposition than the one before us. But I venture to think that we always mean the large one even when we lay down the smaller. For we know enough of science to realize that there is no such thing as perfect rest or repose in this visible universe of ours. If therefore material progress does not clash with moral progress, it must necessarily advance the latter. Nor can we be satisfied with the clumsy way in which sometimes those who cannot defend the large proposition put their case. They seem to be obsessed with the concrete case of thirty millions of India, stated by the late Sir William Wilson Hunter to be living on one meal a day. They say that, before we can think or talk of their moral welfare, we must satisfy their daily wants. With these they say, material progress spells moral progress. And then is taken a sudden jump; what is true of thirty millions is true of the universe. They forget that hard cases make bad law. I need hardly say to you how

ludicrously absurd this deduction would be. No one has ever suggested that grinding pauperism can lead to anything else than moral degradation. Every human being has a right to live and therefore to find the wherewithal to feed himself and where necessary to clothe and house himself. But for this very simple performance we need no assistance from economists or their laws.

'Take no thought for the morrow' is an injunction which finds an echo in almost all the religious scriptures of the world. In well ordered society the securing of one's livelihood should be and is found to be the easiest thing in the world. Indeed, the test of orderliness in a country is not the number of millionaires it owns, but the absence of starvation among its masses. The only statement that has to be examined is, whether it can be laid down as a law of universal application that material advancement means moral progress.

Now let us take a few illustrations. Rome suffered a moral fall when it attained high material affluence. So did Egypt and so perhaps most countries of which we have any historical record. The descendants and kinsmen of the royal and divine Krishna too fell when they were rolling in riches. We do not deny to the Rockefellers and the Carnegies possession of an ordinary measure of morality but we gladly judge them indulgently. I mean that we do not even expect them to satisfy the highest standard of morality. With them material gain has not necessarily meant moral gain. In South Africa, where I had the privilege of associating with thousands of our countrymen on most intimate terms, I observed almost invariably that the greater the possession of riches, the greater was their moral

tarptitude. Our rich men, to say the least, did not advance the moral struggle of passive resistance as did the poor. The rich men's sense of self respect was not so much injured as that of the poorest. If I were not afraid of treading on dangerous ground, I would even come nearer home and show how that possession of riches has been a hindrance to real growth. I venture to think that the scriptures of the world are far safer and sounder treatises on laws of economics than many of the modern text-books. The question we are asking ourselves this evening is not a new one. It was addressed of Jesus two thousand years ago. St. Mark has vividly described the scene. Jesus is in his solemn mood. He is earnest. He talks of eternity. He knows the world about him. He is himself the greatest economist of his time. He succeeded in economising time and space—he transcended them. It is to him at his best that one comes running, kneels down, and asks; 'Good Master, what shall I do that I may inherit eternal life? And Jesus said unto him: 'Why callest thou me good?' There is none good but one, that is God. Thou knowest the commandments. Do not commit adultery. Do not kill, Do not steal, Do not bear false witness. Defraud not, Honour thy father and mother', And he answered and said unto him: 'Master, all these have I observed from my youth'. Then Jesus beholding him loved him and said unto him: 'One thing thou lackest. Go thy way, sell whatever thou hast and give to the poor, and thou shalt have treasure in heaven—come, take up the cross and follow me'. And he was sad at that saying and went away grieved—for he had great possession. And Jesus looked round about and said unto the disciple: 'How hardly shall they that have riches enter into the kingdom



of God'. And the disciples were astonished at his words. But Jesus answereth again and said unto them "Children, how hard is it for them that trust in riches to enter into the kingdom of God. It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God!" Here you have an eternal rule of life stated in the noblest words the English language is capable of producing. But the disciples nodded unbelief as we do even to this day. To him they said as we say to-day: 'But look how the law fails in practice. If we sell all and have nothing, we shall have nothing to eat. We must have money or we cannot even be reasonably moral'. So they state their case thus:—And they were astonished out of measure, saying among themselves: 'Who then can be saved'. And Jesus looking upon them said 'With men it is impossible, but not with God, for with God, all things are possible'. Then Peter began to say unto him: 'Lo, we have left all, and have followed thee'. And Jesus answered and said: 'Verily I say unto you there is no man that has left house or brethren or sisters, or father or mother, or wife or children or lands for my sake and Gospel's but he shall receive one hundredfold, now in this time houses and brethren and sisters and mothers and children and land, and in the world to come, eternal life. But many that are first shall be last and the last, first.' You have here the result or reward, if you prefer the term, of following the law. I have not taken the trouble of copying similar passages from the other non-Hindu scriptures and I will not insult you by quoting, in support of the law stated by Jesus, passages from the writings and sayings of our own sages, passages even stronger, if possible, than the Biblical extracts I have drawn your attention to. Perhaps the strongest

of all the testimonies in favour of the affirmative answer to the question before us are the lives of the greatest teachers of the world. Jesus, Mahomed, Buddha, Nanak, Kabir, Chaitanya, Shankara, Dayanand, Ramakrishna were men who exercised an immense influence over, and moulded the character of, thousands of men. The world is the richer for their having lived in it. And they were all men who deliberately embraced poverty as their lot.

I should not have laboured my point as I have done, if I did not believe that, in so far as we have made the modern materialistic craze our goal, so far are we going down hill in the path of progress. I hold that economic progress in the sense I have put it is antagonistic to real progress. Hence the ancient ideal has been the limitation of activities promoting wealth. This does not put an end to all material ambition. We should still have, as we have always had, in our midst people who make the pursuit of wealth their aim in life. But we have always recognised that it is a fall from the ideal. It is a beautiful thing to know that the wealthiest among us have often felt that to have remained voluntarily poor would have been a higher state for them. That you cannot serve God and Mammon is an economic truth of the highest value. We have to make our choice. Western nations are to-day groaning under the heel of the monster god of materialism. Their moral growth has become stunted. They measure their progress in *£. s. d.* American wealth has become the standard. She is the envy of the other nations. I have heard many of our countrymen say that we will gain American wealth but avoid its methods. I venture to suggest that such an attempt, if it were made, is foredoomed to failure. We cannot be 'wise, temperate

and furious' in a moment. I would have our leaders teach us to be morally supreme in the world. This land of ours was once, we are told, the abode of the Gods. It is not possible to conceive Gods inhabiting a land which is made hideous by the smoke and the din of mill chimneys and factories and whose roadways are traversed by rushing engines, dragging numerous cars crowded with men who know not for the most part what they are after, who are often absent-minded, and whose tempers do not improve by being uncomfortably packed like sardines in boxes and finding themselves in the midst of utter strangers, who would oust them if they could and whom they would, in their turn, oust similarly. I refer to these things because they are held to be symbolical of material progress. But they add not an atom to our happiness. This is what Wallace, the great scientist, has said as his deliberate judgment:

In the earliest records which have come down to us from the past, we find ample indications that general ethical considerations and conceptions, the accepted standard of morality, and the conduct resulting from these, were in no degree inferior to those which prevail to-day.

In a series of chapters he then proceeds to examine the position of the English nation under the advance in wealth it has made. He says: "This rapid growth of wealth and increase of our power over Nature put too great a strain upon our crude civilisation, on our superficial Christianity, and it was accompanied by various forms of social immorality almost as amazing and unprecedented." He then shows how factories have risen on the corpses of men, women and children, how, as the country has rapidly advanced in riches, it has gone down in morality. He shows this by dealing with insanitation, life-destroying trades, adulteration, bribery and gambling. He shows how

with the advance of wealth, justice has become immoral, deaths from alcoholism and suicide have increased, the average of premature births, and congenital defects has increased and prostitution has become an institution. He concludes his examination with these pregnant remarks :

The proceedings of the divorce courts show other aspects of the result of wealth and leisure, while a friend who had been a good deal in London society assured me that, both in country houses and in London, various kinds of orgies were occasionally to be met with, which would hardly have been surpassed in the period of the most dissolute emperors. Of war, too, I need say nothing. It has always been more or less chronic since the rise of the Roman Empire ; but there is now undoubtedly a disinclination for war among all civilized peoples. Yet the vast burden of armaments taken together with the most pious declarations in favour of peace, must be held to show an almost total absence of morality as a guiding principle among the governing classes.

Under the British aegis we have learnt much, but it is my firm belief that there is little to gain from Britain in intrinsic morality, that if we are not careful, we shall introduce all the vices that she has been a prey to owing to the disease of materialism. We can profit by that connection only if we keep our civilization, and our morals straight, *i.e.*, if, instead of boasting of the glorious past, we express the ancient moral glory in our own lives and let our lives bear witness to our boast. Then we shall benefit her and ourselves. If we copy her because she provides us with rulers, both they and we shall suffer degradation. We need not be afraid of ideals or of reducing them to practice even to the uttermost. Ours will only then be a truly spiritual nation when we shall show more truth than gold, greater fearlessness than pomp of power and wealth, greater charity than love of self. If we will but cleanse our houses, our palaces and temples of the attributes of wealth and show in them the attributes of morality, we can offer battle to any combinations of hostile forces without having to carry the burden of a heavy militia. Let us seek first the Kingdom of God and His righteousness, and the irrevocable promise is that everything will be added unto us. These are real economics. May you and I treasure them and enforce them in our daily life.

## THE MORAL BASIS OF CO-OPERATION

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The following is a paper contributed to the Bombay Provincial Co-operative Conference held on 17th September, 1917.

The only claim I have on your indulgence is that some months ago I attended with Mr. Ewbank a meeting of mill-hands to whom he wanted to explain the principles of co-operation. The chawl in which they were living, was as filthy as it well could be. Recent rains had made matters worse. And I must frankly confess that, had it not been for Mr. Ewbank's great zeal for the cause he has made his own, I should have shirked the task. But there we were, seated on a fairly worn out *charpai*, surrounded by men, women and children. Mr. Ewbank opened fire on a man who had put himself forward and who wore not a particularly innocent countenance. After he had engaged him and the other people about him in Gujarati conversation, he wanted me to speak to the people. Owing to the suspicious looks of the man who was first spoken to, I naturally pressed home the moralities of co-operation. I fancy that Mr. Ewbank rather liked the manner in which I handled the subject. Hence, I believe, his kind invitation to me to tax your patience for a few moments upon a consideration of co-operation from moral standpoint.

My knowledge of the technicality of co-operation is next to nothing. My brother, Devadhar, has made the subject his own. Whatever he does, naturally attracts me and predisposes me to think that there must be something good in it and, the handling of it must be fairly difficult. Mr. Ewbank very kindly placed at my disposal

some literature too on the subject. And I have had an unique opportunity of watching the effect of some co-operative effort in Champaran. I have gone through Mr. Ewbank's ten main points which are like the Commandments, and I have gone through the twelve points of Mr. Collins of Behar, which remind me of the law of the Twelve Tables. There are so-called agricultural banks in Champaran. They were to me disappointing efforts, if they were meant to be demonstrations of the success of co-operation. On the other hand, there is quiet work in the same direction being done by Mr. Hodge, a missionary whose efforts are leaving their impress on those who come in contact with him. Mr. Hodge is a co-operative enthusiast and probably considers that the result which he sees flowing from his efforts are due to the working of co-operation. I, who was able to watch the efforts, had no hesitation in inferring that the personal equation counted for success in the one and failure in the other instance.

I am an enthusiast myself, but twenty-five years of experimenting and experience have made me a cautious and discriminating enthusiast. Workers in a cause necessarily, though quite unconsciously exaggerate its merits and often succeed in turning its very defects into advantages. In spite of my caution I consider the little institution I am conducting in Ahmedabad as the finest thing in the world. It alone gives me sufficient inspiration. Critics tell me that it represents a soulless soul-force and that its severe discipline has made it merely mechanical. I suppose both—the critics and I—are wrong. It is, at best, a humble attempt to place at the disposal of the nation a home where men and women may have scope for free and unfettered development of character, in keeping with the national genius, and, if its controllers do

not take care, the discipline that is the foundation of character may frustrate the very end in view. I would venture, therefore, to warn enthusiasts in co-operation against entertaining false hopes.

With Sir Daniel Hamilton it has become a religion. On the 13th January last, he addressed the students of the Scottish Churches College and, in order to point a moral, he instanced Scotland's poverty of two hundred years ago and showed how that great country was raised from a condition of poverty to plenty.

There were two powers, which raised her—the Scottish Church and the Scottish banks. The Church manufactured the men and the banks manufactured the money to give the men a start in life. . . . The Church disciplined the nation in the fear of God which is the beginning of wisdom and in the parish schools of the Church the children learned that the chief end of man's life was to glorify God and to enjoy Him for ever. Men were trained to believe in God and in themselves, and on the trustworthy character so created the Scottish banking system was built.

Sir Daniel then shows that it was possible to build up the marvellous Scottish banking system only on the character so built. So far there can only be perfect agreement with Sir Daniel, for that 'without character there is no co-operation' is a sound maxim. But he would have us go much further. He thus waxes eloquent on co-operation :

Whatever may be your day-dreams of India's future, never forget this that it is to weld India into one, and so enable her to take her rightful place in the world, that the British Government is here ; and the welding hammer in the hand of the Government is the co-operative movement.

In his opinion it is the panacea of all the evils that afflict India at the present moment. In its extended sense it can justify the claim on one condition which need not be mentioned here ; in the limited sense in which Sir Daniel

has used it, I venture to think, it is an enthusiast's exaggeration. Mark his peroration :

Credit, which is only Trust and Faith, is becoming more and more the money power of the world, and in the parchment bullet into which is impressed the faith which removes mountains, India will find victory and peace.

Here there is evident confusion of thought. The credit which is becoming the money power of the world has little moral basis and is not a synonym for Trust or Faith, which are purely moral qualities. After twenty years' experience of hundreds of men, who had dealings with banks in South Africa, the opinion I had so often heard expressed has become firmly rooted in me, that the greater the rascal the greater the credit he enjoys with his banks. The banks do not pry into his moral character; they are satisfied that he meets his overdrafts and promissory notes punctually. The credit system has encircled this beautiful globe of ours like a serpent's coil, and if we do not mind, it bids fair to crush us out of breath. I have witnessed the ruin of many a home through the system, and it has made no difference whether the credit was labelled co-operative or otherwise. The deadly coil has made possible the devastating spectacle in Europe, which we are helplessly looking on. It was perhaps never so true as it is to-day that, as in law so in war, the longest purse finally wins. I have ventured to give prominence to the current belief about credit system in order to emphasise the point that the co-operative movement will be a blessing to India only to the extent that it is a moral movement strictly directed by men fired with religious fervour. It follows, therefore, that co-operation should be confined to men wishing to be morally right, but failing to do so, because of grinding poverty or of the grip of the Mahajan. Facility for obtaining loans at fair rates will not make immoral men



moral. But the wisdom of the Estate or philanthropists demands that they should help on the onward path, men struggling to be good.

Too often do we believe that material prosperity means moral growth. It is necessary that a movement which is fraught with so much good to India should not degenerate into one for merely advancing cheap loans. I was therefore delighted to read the recommendation in the Report of the Committee on Co-operation in India, that

they wish clearly to express their opinion that it is to true co-operation alone, that is, to a co-operation which recognizes the moral aspect of the question that Government must look for the amelioration of the masses and not to a pseudo-co-operative edifice, however imposing, which is built in ignorance of co-operative principles.

With this standard before us, we will not measure the success of the movement by the number of co-operative societies formed, but by the moral condition of the co-operators. The registrars will, in that event, ensure the moral growth of existing societies before multiplying them. And the Government will make their promotion conditional, not upon the number of societies they have registered, but the moral success of the existing institutions. This will mean tracing the course of every pie lent to the members. Those responsible for the proper conduct of co-operative societies will see to it that the money advanced does not find its way into the toddy-seller's bill or into the pockets of the keepers of gambling dens. I would excuse the rapacity of the Mahajan if it has succeeded in keeping the gambling die or toddy from the ryot's home.

A word perhaps about the Mahajan will not be out of place. Co-operation is not a new device. The ryots co-operate to drum out monkeys or birds that destroy their crops. They co-operate to use a common

thrashing floor. I have found them co-operate to protect their cattle to the extent of their devoting the best land for the grazing of their cattle. And they have been found co-operating against a particularly rapacious Mahajan. Doubts have been expressed as to the success of co-operation because of the tightness of the Mahajan's hold on the ryots. I do not share the fears. The mightiest Mahajan must, if he represent an evil force, bend before co-operation, conceived as an essentially moral movement. But my limited experience of the Mahajan of Champaran has made me revise the accepted opinion about his 'blighting influence.' I have found him to be not always relentless, not always exacting of the last pie. He sometimes serves his clients in many ways and even comes to their rescue in the hour of their distress. My observation is so limited that I dare not draw any conclusions from it, but I respectfully enquire whether it is not possible to make a serious effort to draw out the good in the Mahajan and help or induce him to throw out the evil in him. May he not be induced to join the army of co-operation, or has experience proved that he is past praying for?

I note that the movement takes note of all indigenous industries. I beg publicly to express my gratitude to Government for helping me in my humble effort to improve the lot of the weaver. The experiment I am conducting shows that there is a vast field for work in this direction. No well-wisher of India, no patriot dare look upon the impending destruction of the handloom weaver with equanimity. As Dr. Mann has stated, this industry used to supply the peasant with an additional source of livelihood and an insurance against famine. Every Registrar who will nurse back to life

this important and graceful industry will earn the gratitude of India. My humble effort consists firstly in making researches as to the possibilities of simple reforms in the orthodox hand-loom, secondly, in weaning the educated youth from the craving for Government or other services and the feeling that education renders him unfit for independent occupation and inducing him to take to weaving as a calling as honourable as that of a barrister or a doctor, and thirdly by helping those weavers who have abandoned their occupation to revert to it. I will not weary the audience with any statement on the first two parts of the experiment. The third may be allowed a few sentences as it has a direct bearing upon the subject before us. I was able to enter upon it only six months ago. Five families that had left off the calling have reverted to it and they are doing a prosperous business. The Ashram supplies them at their door with the yarn they need; its volunteers take delivery of the cloth woven, paying them cash at the market rate. The Ashram merely loses interest on the loan advanced for the yarn. It has as yet suffered no loss and is able to restrict its loss to a minimum by limiting the loan to a particular figure. All future transactions are strictly cash. We are able to command a ready sale for the cloth received. The loss of interest, therefore, on the transaction is negligible. I would like the audience to note its purely moral character from start to finish. The Ashram depends for its existence on such help as *friends* render it. We, therefore, can have no warrant for charging interest. The weavers could not be saddled with it. Whole families that were breaking to pieces are put together again. The use-

of the loan is pre-determined. And we, the middlemen, being volunteers, obtain the privilege of entering into the lives of these families, I hope, for their and our betterment. We cannot lift them without being lifted ourselves. This last relationship has not yet been developed, but we hope, at an early date, to take in hand the education too of these families and not rest satisfied till we have touched them at every point. This is not too ambitious a dream. God willing, it will be a reality some day. I have ventured to dilate upon the small experiment to illustrate what I mean by co-operation to present it to others for imitation. Let us be sure of our ideal. We shall ever fail to realize it, but we should never cease to strive for it. Then there need be no fear of "co-operation of scoundrels" that Ruskin so rightly dreaded.

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### THIRD CLASS IN INDIAN RAILWAYS

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The following communication was made by Mr. Gandhi to the Press from Ranchi, on September 25, 1917.

I have now been in India for over two years and a half after my return from South Africa. Over one quarter of that time I have passed on the Indian trains travelling third class by choice. I have travelled up north as far as Lahore, down south up to Tranquebar, and from Karachi to Calcutta. Having resorted to third class travelling, among other reasons, for the purpose of studying the conditions under which this class of passengers travel, I have naturally made as many critical observations as I could. I have fairly covered the majority of railway systems during this period. Now and then I have entered into correspondence with the management of the different railways about the defects that have come under my notice. But I think that the time has come when I should invite the press and the public to join in a crusade against a grievance which has too long remained unredressed, though much of it is capable of redress without great difficulty.

On the 12th instant I booked at Bombay for Madras by the mail train and paid Rs. 13-9. It was labelled to carry 22 passengers. These could only have seating accommodation. There were no bunks in this carriage whereon passengers could lie with any degree of safety or comfort. There were two nights to be passed in this train before reaching Madras. If not more than 22 passengers found their way into my carriage before we reached Poona,

it was because the bolder ones kept the others at bay. With the exception of two or three insistent passengers, all had to find their sleep being seated all the time. After reaching Raichur the pressure became unbearable. The rush of passengers could not be stayed. The fighters among us found the task almost beyond them. The guards or other railway servants came in only to push in more passengers.

A defiant Memon merchant protested against this packing of passengers like sardines. In vain did he say that this was his fifth night on the train. The guard insulted him and referred him to the management at the terminus. There were during this night as many as 35 passengers in the carriage during the greater part of it. Some lay on the floor in the midst of dirt and some had to keep standing. A free fight was, at one time, avoided only by the intervention of some of the older passengers who did not want to add to the discomfort by an exhibition of temper.

On the way passengers got for tea tannin water with filthy sugar and a whitish looking liquid miscalled milk which gave this water a muddy appearance. I can vouch for the appearance, but I cite the testimony of the passengers as to the taste.

Not during the whole of the journey was the compartment once swept or cleaned. The result was that every time you walked on the floor or rather cut your way through the passengers seated on the floor, you waded through dirt.

The closet was also not cleaned during the journey and there was no water in the water tank.

Refreshments sold to the passengers were dirty-looking, handed by dirtier hands, coming out of filthy

receptacles and weighed in equally unattractive scales. These were previously sampled by millions of flies. I asked some of the passengers who went in for these dainties to give their opinion. Many of them used choice expressions as to the quality but were satisfied to state that they were helpless in the matter; they had to take things as they came.

On reaching the station I found that the ghariwala would not take me unless I paid the fare he wanted. I mildly protested and told him I would pay him the authorized fare. I had to turn passive resister before I could be taken. I simply told him he would have to pull me out of the ghari or call the policeman.

The return journey was performed in no better manner. The carriage was packed already and but for a friend's intervention I could not have been able to secure even a seat. My admission was certainly beyond the authorised number. This compartment was constructed to carry 9 passengers but it had constantly 12 in it. At one place an important railway servant swore at a protestant, threatened to strike him and locked the door over the passengers whom he had with difficulty squeezed in. To this compartment there was a closet falsely so called. It was designed as a European closet but could hardly be used as such. There was a pipe in it but no water, and I say without fear of challenge that it was pestilentially dirty.

The compartment itself was evil looking. Dirt was lying thick upon the wood work and I do not know that it had ever seen soap or water.

The compartment had an exceptional assortment of passengers. There were three stalwart Punjabi Maho-

medans, two refined Tamilians and two Mahomedan merchants who joined us later. The merchants related the bribes they had to give to procure comfort. One of the Punjabis had already travelled three nights and was weary and fatigued. But he could not stretch himself. He said he had sat the whole day at the Central Station watching passengers giving bribe and procure their tickets. Another said he had himself to pay Rs. 5 before he could get his ticket and his seat. These three men were bound for Ludhiana and had still more nights of travel in store for them.

What I have described is not exceptional but normal. I have got down at Raichur, Dhond, Sonapur, Chakradharpur, Purulia, Asansol and other junction stations and been at the 'Mosafirkhanas' attached to these stations. They are discreditable looking places where there is no order, no cleanliness but utter confusion and horrible din and noise. Passengers have no benches or not enough to sit on. They squat on dirty floors and eat dirty food. They are permitted to throw the leavings of their food and spit where they like, sit how they like and smoke everywhere. The closets attached to these places defy description. I have not the power adequately to describe them without committing a breach of the laws of decent speech. Disinfecting powder, ashes or disinfecting fluids are unknown. The army of flies buzzing about them warns you against their use. But a third-class traveller is dumb and helpless. He does not want to complain even though to go to these places may be to court death. I know passengers who fast while they are travelling just in order to lessen the misery of their life in the trains. At Sonapur flies having failed, wasps have come forth to warn the public and the authorities, but yet to no purpose. At



the Imperial Capital a certain third class hooking office is a Black-Hole fit only to be destroyed.

Is it any wonder that plague has become endemic in India? Any other result is impossible where passengers always leave some dirt where they go and take more on leaving?

On Indian trains alone passengers smoke with impunity in all carriages irrespective of the presence of the fair sex and irrespective of the protest of non-smokers. And this, notwithstanding a bye-law which prevents a passenger from smoking without the permission of his fellows in the compartment which is not allotted to smokers.

The existence of the awful war cannot be allowed to stand in the way of the removal of this gigantic evil. War can be no warrant for tolerating dirt and overcrowding. One could understand an entire stoppage of passenger traffic in a crisis like this, but never a continuation or accentuation of insanitation and conditions that must undermine health and morality.

Compare the lot of the first class passengers with that of the third class. In the Madras case the first class fare is over five times as much as the third class fare. Does the third class passenger get one-fifth, even one-tenth, of the comforts of his first class fellow? It is but simple justice to claim that some relative proportion be observed between the cost and comfort.

It is a known fact that the third class traffic pays for the ever-increasing luxuries of first and second class travelling. Surely a third class passenger is entitled at least to the bare necessities of life.

In neglecting the third class passengers, opportunity of giving a splendid education to millions in orderliness, sanitation, decent composite life and cultivation of simple

and clean tastes is being lost. Instead of receiving an object lesson in these matters third class passengers have their sense of decency and cleanliness blunted during their travelling experience.

Among the many suggestions that can be made for dealing with the evil here described, I would respectfully include this : let the people in high places, the Viceroy, the Commander-in-Chief, the Rajas, Maharajas, the Imperial Councillors and others, who generally travel in superior classes, without previous warning, go through the experiences now and then of third class travelling. We would then soon see a remarkable change in the conditions of third class travelling and the uncomplaining millions will get some return for the fares they have under the expectation of being carried from place to place with ordinary creature comforts.

## VERNACULARS AS MEDIA OF INSTRUCTION

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The following introduction was written by Mr. Gandhi to Dr. P. J. Mehta's "Self-Government Series" No. 1, entitled "Vernaculars as Media of Instruction in Indian Schools and Colleges."

It is to be hoped that Dr. Mehta's labour of love will receive the serious attention of English educated India. The following pages were written by him for the *Vedanta Kesari* of Madras and are now printed in their present form for circulation throughout India. The question of vernaculars as media of instruction is of national importance; neglect of the vernaculars means national suicide. One hears many protagonists of the English language being continued as the medium of instruction pointing to the fact that English educated Indians are the sole custodians of public and patriotic work. It would be monstrous if it were not so. For the only education given in this country is through the English language. The fact, however, is that the results are not at all proportionate to the time we give to our education. We have not reacted on the masses. But I must not anticipate Dr. Mehta. He is in earnest. He writes feelingly. He has examined the pros and cons and collected a mass of evidence in support of his arguments. The latest pronouncement on the subject is that of the Viceroy.\* Whilst His Excellency is unable to offer a solution, he is keenly alive to the necessity of imparting instruction in our schools through the vernaculars. The Jews of Middle and Eastern Europe, who are scattered in all parts of the world,

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\* Lord Hardinge.

finding it necessary to have a common tongue for mutual intercourse, have raised Yiddish to the status of a language, and have succeeded in translating into Yiddish the best books to be found in the world's literature. Even they could not satisfy the soul's yearning through the many foreign tongues of which they are masters; nor did the learned few among them wish to tax the masses of the Jewish population with having to learn a foreign language before they could realise their dignity. So they have enriched what was at one time looked upon as a mere jargon—but what the Jewish children learnt from their mothers—by taking special pains to translate into it the best thought of the world. This is a truly marvellous work. It has been done during the present generation, and Webster's Dictionary defines it as a polyglot jargon used for inter-communication by Jews from different nations.

But a Jew of Middle and Eastern Europe would feel insulted if his mother-tongue were now so described. If these Jewish scholars have succeeded, within a generation, in giving their masses a language of which they may feel proud, surely it should be an easy task for us to supply the needs of our own vernaculars which are cultured languages. South Africa teaches us the same lesson. There was a duel there between the Taal, a corrupt form of Dutch, and English. The Boer mothers and the Boer fathers were determined that they would not let their children, with whom they in their infancy talked in the Taal, be weighed down with having to receive instruction through English. The case for English here was a strong one. It had able pleaders for it. But English had to yield before Boer patriotism. It may be observed that they rejected even the High Dutch. The

school masters, therefore, who are accustomed to speak the published Dutch of Europe, are compelled to teach the easier Taal. And literature of an excellent character is at the present moment growing up in South Africa in the Taal, which was only a few years ago, the common medium of speech between simple but brave rustics. If we have lost faith in our vernaculars, it is a sign of want of faith in ourselves; it is the surest sign of decay. And no scheme of self-government, however benevolently or generously it may be bestowed upon us, will ever make us a self-governing nation, if we have no respect for the languages our mothers speak.

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## SOCIAL SERVICE

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At the anniversary celebration of the Social Service League held in Madras on February 10, 1916, Mr. Gandhi delivered an address on "Social Service." Mrs. Whitehead presided. He said :

I have been asked this evening to speak to you about social service. If this evening you find that I am not able to do sufficient justice to this great audience you will ascribe it to so many engagements that I hastily and unthinkingly accepted. It was my desire that I should have at least a few moments to think out what I shall have to say to you but it was not to be. However, as our Chair Lady has said, it was work we want and not speeches. I am aware that you will have lost very little, if anything at all, if you find at the end of this evening's talk that you have listened to very little.

Friends, for Social Service as for any other service on the face of the earth, there is one condition indispensable namely, qualifications, and proper qualifications, on the part of those who want to render social service or any other service. So we shall ask ourselves this evening whether those of us who are already engaged in this kind of service and others who have aspired to render the service possess these necessary qualifications. Because you will agree with me that in social service if they can mend matters they can also spoil matters and in trying to do service however well intentioned that service might be, if they are not qualified for that service they will be rendering not service but disservice. What are these qualifications ?

Imagine why I must repeat to you almost the qualifications that I described this morning to the students in the Young Men's Christian Association Hall. Because they are of universal application and they are necessary for any class of work, much more so in social service at this time of the day in our national life in our dear country. It seems to me that we require truth in one hand and fearlessness in the other hand. Unless we carry the torchlight we shall not see the step in front of us and unless we carry the quality of fearlessness we shall not be able to give the message that we might want to give. Unless we have this fearlessness I feel sure that when that supreme final test comes we shall be found wanting. Then I ask you to ask yourselves whether those of you who are engaged in this service and those of you who want hereafter to be engaged in this service have these two qualities. Let me remind you also that these qualities may be trained in us in a manner detrimental to ourselves and in a manner detrimental to those with whom we may come in contact. This is a dangerous statement almost to make, as if truth could be ever so handled, and in making that statement I would like you also to consider that truth comes not as truth but only as truth so-called. In the inimitable book *Ramayana* we find that Indrajit and Lakshman, his opponent, possessed the same qualities. But Lakshman's life was guided by principle, based upon religion while Indrajit's principle was based upon irreligion, and we find what Indrajit possessed was mere dross and what Lakshman possessed was of great assistance not only to the side on whose behalf he was fighting but he has left a treasure for us to value. What was that additional quality he possessed? So, I hold that life without religion is life

without principle, that life without principle is like a ship without a rudder. Just as our ship without rudder, the helmsman plying at it, is tossed about from place to place and never reaches its destination, so will a man without the heart-grasp of religion whirl without ever reaching his destined goal. So, I suggest to every social servant that he must not run away with the idea that he will serve his whole countrymen unless he has got these two qualities duly sanctified by religion and by a life divinely guided.

After paying a glowing tribute to the Madras Social Service League for its work in certain Pariah villages in the city he went on to say :

It is no use white-washing those needs which we know everyday stare us in the face. It is not enough that we clear out the villages which are occupied by our Pariah brethren. They are amenable to reason and persuasion. Shall we have to say that the so-called higher classes are not equally amenable to reason and to persuasion and to hygienic laws which are indispensable in order to live a city-life. We may do many things with immunity but when we immediately transfer ourselves to crowded streets where we have hardly air to breathe, the life becomes changed, and we have to obey another set of laws which immediately come into being. Do we do that? It is no use saddling the municipality with the responsibilities for the condition in which we find not only the central parts of Madras but the central parts of every city of importance in India, and I feel no municipality in the world will be able to over-ride the habits of a class of people handed to them from generation to generation. It can be done only by such bodies as Social Service Leagues. If we pulsate with a new life, a new vision shall open before us in the near future, I think that these are the signs which will be



an indication to show that we are pulsating with a new life, which is going to be a proper life, which will add dignity to our nationality and which will carry the banner of progress forward. I, therefore, suggest that it is a question of sanitary reform in these big cities, which will be a hopeless task if we expect our municipalities to do this unaided by this voluntary work. Far be it from me to absolve the municipalities from their own responsibilities. I think there is a great deal yet to be done in the municipalities. Only the other day I read with a great degree of pain a report about the proceedings of the Bombay Municipality, and the deplorable fact in it is that a large part of the time of the Municipality was devoted to talking over trifles while they neglected matters of great moment. After all, I shall say that they will be able to do very little in as much as there is a demand for their work on the people themselves.

## THE SATYAGRAHASHRAMA

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This address was delivered in the Y.M.C.A. Auditorium, Madras, on the 16th February 1916, the Hon. Rev. G. Pittendrigh, of the Madras Christian College, presiding :

To many of the students who came here last year to converse with me, I said I was about to establish an institution—*Ashrama*—somewhere in India, and it is about that place that I am going to talk to you this morning. I feel and I have felt, during the whole of my public life, that what we need, what any nation needs, but we perhaps of all the nations of the world need just now is nothing else and nothing less than character-building. And this is the view propounded by that great patriot, Mr. Gokhale (cheers). As you know in many of his speeches, he used to say that we would get nothing, we would deserve nothing unless we had character to back what we wished for. Hence his founding of that great body, the Servants of India Society. And as you know, in the prospectus that has been issued in connection with the Society, Mr. Gokhale has deliberately stated that it was necessary to spiritualise the political life of the country. You know also that he used to say so often that our average was less than the average of so many European nations. I do not know whether that statement by him whom, with pride, I consider to be my political *Guru*, has really foundation in fact, but I do believe that there is much to be said to justify it in so far as educated India is concerned; not because we, the educated portion of the community, have blundered, but because we have been creatures of circumstances. Be that as it may, this is the maxim of life which I have accepted, namely, that no work done by any

man, no matter how great he is, will really prosper unless he has religious backing. But what is religion? The question will be immediately asked. I for one, would answer: Not the religion which you will get after reading all the scriptures of the world; it is not really a grasp by the brain, but it is a heart-grasp. It is a thing which is not alien to us, but it is a thing which has to be evolved out of us. It is always within us, with some consciously so: with the others quite unconsciously. But it is there: and whether we wake up this religious instinct in us through outside assistance or by inward growth, no matter how it is done, it has got to be done if we want to do anything in the right manner and anything that is going to persist.

Our Scriptures have laid down certain rules as maxims of life and as axioms which we have to take for granted as self-demonstrated truths. The Shastras tell us that without living, according to these maxims, we are incapable even of having a reasonable perception of religion. Believing in these implicitly for all these long years and having actually endeavoured to reduce to practice these injunctions of the Shastras, I have deemed it necessary to seek the association of those who think with me, in founding this institution. And I shall venture this morning to place before you the rules that have been drawn up and that have to be observed by every one who seeks to be a member of that *Ashram*.

Five of these are known as *Yamas* and the first and the foremost is,

#### THE VOW OF TRUTH

Not truth simply as we ordinarily understand it, that as far as possible, we ought not to resort to a lie,

that is to say, not truth which merely answers the saying, "Honesty is the best policy"—implying that if it is not the best policy, we may depart from it. But here truth as it is conceived, means that we have to rule our life by this law of Truth at any cost. And in order to satisfy the definition I have drawn upon the celebrated illustration of the life of *Prahlad*. For the sake of truth, he dared to oppose his own father, and he defended himself, not by retaliation, by paying his father back in his own coin, but in defence of Truth, as he knew it; he was prepared to die without caring to return the blows that he had received from his father or from those who were charged with his father's instructions. Not only that: he would not in any way even parry the blows: on the contrary, with a smile on his lips, he underwent the innumerable tortures to which he was subjected, with the result that, at last, Truth rose triumphant; not that Prahlad suffered the tortures because he knew that some day or other in his very life-time he would be able to demonstrate the infallibility of the Law of Truth. That fact was there; but if he had died in the midst of tortures, he would still have adhered to Truth. That is the Truth which I would like to follow. There was an incident I noticed yesterday. It was a trifling incident, but I think these trifling incidents are like straws which show which way the wind is blowing. The incident was this: I was talking to a friend who wanted to talk to me aside, and we were engaged in a private conversation. A third friend dropped in, and he politely asked whether he was intruding. The friend to whom I was talking said: "Oh, no, there is nothing private here." I felt taken aback a little, because, as I was taken aside, I knew that so far as

this friend was concerned, the conversation was private. But he immediately, out of politeness, I would call it overpoliteness, said, there was no private conversation and that he (the third friend) could join. I suggest to you that this is a departure from my definition of Truth. I think that the friend should have, in the gentlest manner possible but still openly and frankly, said: "Yes, just now, as you properly say, you would be intruding," without giving the slightest offence to the person if he was himself a gentleman—and we are bound to consider every body to be a gentleman; unless he proves to be otherwise. But I may be told that the incident, after all, proves the gentility of the nation. I think that it is over-proving the case. If we continue to say these things out of politeness, we really become a nation of hypocrites. I recall a conversation I had with an English friend. He was comparatively a stranger. He is a Principal of a College and has been in India for several years. He was comparing notes with me, and he asked me whether I would admit that we, unlike most Englishmen, would not dare to say "No" when it was "No" that we *meant*. And I must confess I immediately said "Yes"; I agreed with that statement:—We do hesitate to say "No" frankly and boldly, when we want to pay due regard to the sentiments of the person whom we are addressing. In our *Ashrama* we make it a rule that we must say "No" when we mean "No," regardless of consequences. This then is the first rule. Then we come to the

#### DOCTRINE OF AHIMSA

Literally speaking, *Ahimsa* means non-killing. But to me it has a world of meaning and takes me into realms much higher, infinitely higher, than the realm to which I would go, if I merely understood by *Ahimsa* non-killing.

*Ahimsa* really means that you may not offend anybody, you may not harbour an uncharitable thought even in connection with one who may consider himself to be your enemy. Pray notice the guarded nature of this thought: I do not say "whom you consider to be your enemy," but "who may consider himself to be your enemy." For one who follows the doctrine of *Ahimsa* there is no room for an enemy; he denies the existence of an enemy. But there are people who consider themselves to be his enemies, and he cannot help that circumstance. So, it is held that we may not harbour an evil thought even in connection with such persons. If we return blow for blow, we depart from the doctrine of *Ahimsa*. But I go further. If we resent a friend's action or the so-called enemy's action, we still fall short of this doctrine. But when I say, we should not resent, I do not say that we should acquiesce: but by resenting I mean wishing that some harm should be done to the enemy, or that he should be put out of the way, not even by any action of ours, but by the action of somebody else, or, say, by Divine agency. If we harbour even this thought, we depart from this doctrine of *Ahimsa*. Those who join the *Ashrama* have to literally accept that meaning. That does not mean that we practise that doctrine in its entirety. Far from it. It is an ideal which we have to reach, and it is an ideal to be reached even at this very moment, if we are capable of doing so. But it is not a proposition in geometry to be learnt by heart; it is not even like solving difficult problems in higher mathematics; it is infinitely more difficult than solving those problems. Many of you have burnt the midnight oil in solving those problems. If you want to follow out this doctrine, you will have to do much more than burn the midnight oil. You will have to pass many a sleepless night, and go through

many a mental torture and agony before you can reach, before you can even be within measurable distance of this goal. It is the goal and nothing less than that, you and I have to reach, if we want to understand what a religious life means. I will not say much more on this doctrine than this ; that a man who believes in the efficacy of this doctrine finds in the ultimate stage, when he is about to reach the goal, the whole world at his feet,—not that he wants the whole world at his feet, but it must be so. If you express your love—*Ahimsa*—in such a manner that it impresses itself indelibly upon your so-called enemy, he must return that love. Another thought which comes out of this is that, under this rule, there is no room for organised assassinations, and there is no room for murders even openly committed, and there is no room for any violence even for the sake of your country, and even for guarding the honour of precious ones that may be under your charge. After all, that would be a poor defence of the honour. This doctrine of *Ahimsa* tells us that we may guard the honour of those who are under our charge by delivering *ourselves* into the hands of the man who would commit the sacrilege. And that requires far greater physical and mental courage than the delivering of blows. You may have some degree of physical power,—I do not say courage—and you may use that power. But after that is expended, what happens? The other man is filled with wrath and indignation, and you have made him more angry by matching your violence against his ; and when he has done you to death, the rest of his violence is delivered against your charge. But if you do not retaliate, but stand your ground, between your charge and the opponent, simply receiving the blows without retaliating, what happens? I give you my promise that the whole of

the violence will be expended on you, and your charge will be left unscathed. Under this plan of life there is no conception of patriotism which justifies such wars as you witness to-day in Europe. Then there is

#### THE VOW OF CELIBACY

Those who want to perform national service, or those who want to have a glimpse of the real religious life must lead a celibate life, no matter if married or unmarried. Marriage but brings a woman closer together with the man, and they become friends in a special sense, never to be parted either in this life or in the lives that are to come. But I do not think that, in our conception of marriage, our lusts should necessarily enter. Be that as it may, this is what is placed before those who come to the *Ashrama*. I do not deal with that at any length. Then we have

#### THE VOW OF CONTROL OF THE PALATE

A man who wants to control his animal passions easily does so if he controls his palate. I fear this is one of the most difficult vows to follow. I am just now coming after having inspected the Victoria Hostel. I saw there not to my dismay, though it should be to my dismay; but I am used to it now, that there are so many kitchens, not kitchens that are established in order to serve caste restrictions, but kitchens that have become necessary in order that people can have the condiments, and the exact weight of the condiments, to which they are used in the respective places from which they have come. And therefore we find that for the Brahmans themselves there are different compartments and different kitchens catering for the delicate tastes of all these different groups. I suggest to you that this is simply slavery to the palate, rather than mastery over it. I may say this: unless we take our minds



off from this habit, and unless we shut our eyes to the tea-shops and coffee shops and all these kitchens, and unless we are satisfied with foods that are necessary for the proper maintenance of our physical health, and unless we are prepared to rid ourselves of stimulating, heating and exciting condiments that we mix with our food, we will certainly not be able to control the over-abundant, unnecessary, and exciting stimulation that we may have. If we do not do that, the result naturally is, that we abuse ourselves and we abuse even the sacred trust given to us, and we become less than animals and brutes, eating, drinking and indulging in passions we share in common with the animals; but have you ever seen a horse or a cow indulging in the abuse of the palate as we do? Do you suppose that it is a sign of civilization, a sign of real life that we should multiply our eatables so far that we do not even know where we are; and seek dishes until at last we have become absolutely mad and run after the newspaper sheets which give us advertisements about these dishes? Then we have

#### THE VOW OF NON-THIEVING

I suggest that we are thieves in a way. If I take anything that I do not need for my own immediate use, and keep it, I thief it from somebody else. I venture to suggest that it is the fundamental law of Nature, without exception, that Nature produces enough for our wants from day to-day, and if only everybody took enough for himself and nothing more, there would be no pauperism in this world, there would be no man dying of starvation in this world. But so long as we have got this inequality so long we are thieving. I am no socialist and I do not want to dispossess those who have got possessions: but I do say that, personally, those of us who want





KASTURIBHAI GANDHI

to see light out of darkness have to follow this rule. I do not want to dispossess anybody. I should then be departing from the rule of *Ahimsa*. If somebody else possesses more than I do, let him. But so far as my own life has to be regulated, I do say that I dare not possess anything which I do not want. In India we have got three millions of people having to be satisfied with one meal a day, and that meal consisting of a chapatti containing no fat in it, and a pinch of salt. You and I have no right to any thing that we really have until these three millions are clothed and fed better. You and I, who ought to know better, must adjust our wants, and even undergo voluntary starvation in order that they may be nursed, fed and clothed. Then there is the vow of non-possession which follows as a matter of course. Then I go to

#### THE VOW OF SWADESHI

The vow of *Swadeshi* is a necessary vow. But you are conversant with the *Swadeshi* life and the *Swadeshi* spirit. I suggest to you we are departing from one of the sacred laws of our being when we leave our neighbour and go out somewhere else in order to satisfy our wants. If a man comes from Bombay here and offers you wares, you are not justified in supporting the Bombay merchant or trader so long as you have got a merchant at your very door, born and bred in Madras. That is my view of *Swadeshi*. In your village barber, you are bound to support him to the exclusion of the finished barber who may come to you from Madras. If you find it necessary that your village barber should reach the attainments of the barber from Madras, you may train him to that. Send him to Madras by all means, if you wish, in order that he may learn his calling. Until you do that, you are not

justified in going to another barber. That is *Swadeshi*. So, when we find that there are many things that we cannot get in India, we must try to do without them. We may have to do without many things which we may consider necessary; but believe me, when you have that frame of mind, you will find a great burden taken off your shoulders, even as the Pilgrim did in that inimitable book, "Pilgrim's Progress". There came a time when the mighty burden that the Pilgrim was carrying on his shoulders unconsciously dropped from him, and he felt a freer man than he was when he started on the journey. So will you feel freer men than you are now immediately you adopt this *Swadeshi* life. We have also

#### THE VOW OF FEARLESSNESS

I found throughout my wanderings in India that India, educated India, is seized with a paralysing fear. We may not open our lips in public; we may not declare our confirmed opinions in public; we may talk about them secretly; and we may do anything we like within the four walls of our house—but those are not for public consumption. If we had taken a vow of silence I would have nothing to say. When we open our lips in public, we say things which we do not really believe in. I do not know whether this is not the experience of almost every public man who speaks in India. I then suggest to you that there is only one Being, if Being is the proper term to be used, whom we have to fear, and that is God. When we fear God, we shall fear no man, no matter how high-placed he may be. And if you want to follow the vow of truth in any shape or form, fearlessness is the necessary consequence. And so you find, in the *Bhagavad Gita*, fearlessness is declared as the first essential quality of a Brahmin. We fear consequence, and therefore we

are afraid to tell the Truth. A man who fears God will certainly not fear any earthly consequence. Before we can aspire to the position of understanding what religion is, and before we can aspire to the position of guiding the destinies of India, do you not see that we should adopt this habit of fearlessness? Or shall we overawe our countrymen even as we are overawed? We thus see how important this fearlessness now is. And we have also

#### THE VOW REGARDING THE UNTOUCHABLES

There is an ineffaceable blot that Hinduism to-day carries with it. I have declined to believe that ; it has been handed to us from immemorial times. I think that this miserable, wretched, enslaving spirit of untouchableness must have come to us when we were in the cycle of our lives, at our lowest ebb, and that evil has still stuck to us and it still remains with us. It is, to my mind, a curse that has come to us, and as long as that curse remains with us, so long I think we are bound to consider that every affliction that we labour under in this sacred land is a fit and proper punishment for this great and indelible crime that we are committing. That any person should be considered untouchable because of his calling passes one's comprehension ; and you, the student world, who receive all this modern education, if you become a party to this crime, it were better that you received no education whatsoever.

Of course, we are labouring under a very heavy handicap. Although you may realise that there cannot be a single human being on this earth who should be considered to be untouchable, you cannot react upon your families, you cannot react upon your surroundings, because all your thought is conceived in a foreign tongue, and all your energy is devoted to that. And so we have

also introduced a rule in this Ashrama: that we shall receive our

#### EDUCATION THROUGH THE VERNACULARS

In Europe, every cultured man learns not only his language but also other languages, certainly three or four. And even as they do in Europe, in order to solve the problem of language in India, we, in this Ashrama, make it a point to learn as many Indian vernaculars as we possibly can. And I assure you that the trouble of learning these languages is nothing compared to the trouble that we have to take in mastering the English language. We never master the English language: with some exceptions it has not been possible for us to do so; we can never express ourselves as clearly as we can in our own mother tongue. How dare we rub out of our memory all the years of our infancy? But that is precisely what we do when we commence our higher life, as we call it, through the medium of a foreign tongue. This creates a breach in our life for bringing which we shall have to pay dearly and heavily. And you will see now the connection between these two things—education and untouchableness—this persistence of the spirit of untouchableness even at this time of the day in spite of the spread of knowledge and education. Education has enabled us to see the horrible crime. But we are seized with fear also and, therefore, we cannot take this doctrine to our homes. And we have got a superstitious veneration for our family traditions and for the members of our family. You say: "My parents will die if I tell them that I, at least, can no longer partake of his crime." I say that Prahlad never considered that his father would die if he pronounced the sacred syllables of the name of Vishnu. On the contrary he

made the whole of that household ring, from one corner to another, by repeating that name even in the sacred presence of his father. And so you and I may do this thing in the sacred presence of our parents. If, after receiving this rude shock, some of them expire, I think that would be no calamity. It may be that some rude shocks of the kind might have to be delivered. So long as we persist in these things which have been handed down to us for generations, these incidents may happen. But there is a higher law of Nature, and in due obedience to that higher law, my parents and myself should make that sacrifice.

#### AND THEN WE FOLLOW HAND-WEAVING

You may ask: "Why should we use our hands?" and say "the manual work has got to be done by those who are illiterate. I can only occupy myself with reading literature and political essays". I think we have to realise the dignity of labour. If a barber or shoe-maker attends a college, he ought not to abandon the profession of barber or shoe-maker. I consider that a barber's profession is just as good as the profession of medicine.

Last of all, when you have conformed to these rules, think that then, and not till then, you may come to

#### POLITICS

and dabble in them to your heart's content, and certainly you will then never go wrong. Politics, divorced of religion, has absolutely no meaning. If the student-world crowd the political platforms of this country, to my mind, it is not necessarily a healthy sign of national growth; but that does not mean that you, in your student life, ought not to study politics. Politics are a part of our being; we ought to understand our national institutions, and we ought to understand our national



growth and all those things. We may do it from our infancy. So, in our *Ashrama*, every child is taught to understand the political institutions of our country, and to know how the country is vibrating with new emotions, with new aspirations, with a new life. But we want also the steady light, the infallible light, of religious faith, not a faith which merely appeals to the intelligence, but a faith which is indelibly inscribed on the heart. First, we want to realise that religious consciousness, and immediately we have done that, I think the whole department of life is open to us, and it should then be a sacred privilege of students and everybody to partake of that whole life, so that when they grow to manhood and when they leave their colleges, they may do so as men properly equipped to battle with life. To-day what happens is this: much of the political life is confined to student life; immediately the students leave their colleges and cease to be students, they sink into oblivion, they seek miserable employments, carrying miserable emoluments, rising no higher in their aspirations, knowing nothing of God, knowing nothing of fresh air or bright light and nothing of that real vigorous independence that comes out of obedience to these laws that I have ventured to place before you.

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## INDIAN MERCHANTS

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Mr. Gandhi was entertained by the merchants of Broach during his visit to the city and presented with an address of welcome. Mr. Gandhi replied to the address in the following terms:

Merchants always have the spirit of adventure, intellect and wealth, as without these qualities their business cannot go on. But now they must have the fervour of patriotism in them. Patriotism is necessary even for religion. If the spirit of patriotism is awakened through religious fervour, then that patriotism will shine out brilliantly. So it is necessary that patriotism should be roused in the mercantile community.

The merchants take more part in public affairs now-a-days than before. When merchants take to politics through patriotism, *Swaraj* is as good as obtained. Some of you might be wondering how we can get *Swaraj*. I lay my hand on my heart and say that, when the merchant class understands the spirit of patriotism, then only can we get *Swaraj* quickly. *Swaraj* then will be quite a natural thing.

Amongst the various keys which will unlock *Swaraj* to us, the *Swadeshi* vow is the golden one. It is in the hands of the merchants to compel the observance of the *Swadeshi* vow in the country, and this is an adventure which can be popularised by the merchants. I humbly request you to undertake this adventure and then you will see what wonders you can do.

This being so, I have to say with regret that it is the merchant class which has brought ruin to the *Swadeshi*

practice and the *Swadeshi* movement in this country. Complaints have lately risen in Bengal about the increase of rates, and one of them is against Gujarat. It is complained there that the prices of *dhotis* have been abnormally increased and *dhotis* go from Gujarat. No one wants you not to earn money, but it must be earned righteously and not be ill-gotten. Merchants must earn money by fair means. Unfair means must never be used.

India's strength lies with the merchant class. So much does not lie even with the army. Trade is the cause of war, and the merchant class has the key of war in their hands. Merchants raise the money and the army is raised on the strength of it. The power of England and Germany rests on their trading class. A country's prosperity depends upon its mercantile community. I consider it as a sign of good luck that I should receive an address from the merchant class. Whenever I remember Broach, I will enquire if the merchants who have given me an address this day, have righteous faith and patriotism. If I receive a disappointing reply, I will think that merely a wave of giving addresses had come over India and that I had a share in it.

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## NATIONAL DRESS

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Mr. Gandhi wrote the following reply to Mr. Irwin's criticism of his dress in the *Pioneer* during the Champaran enquiry:

I have hitherto successfully resisted to temptation of either answering your or Mr. Irwin's criticism of the humble work I am doing in Champaran. Nor am I going to succumb now except with regard to a matter which Mr. Irwin has thought fit to dwell upon and about which he has not even taken the trouble of being correctly informed. I refer to his remarks on my manner of dressing.

My familiarity with the minor amenities of Western civilisation has taught me to respect my national costume, and it may interest Mr. Irwin to know that the dress I wear in Champaran is the dress I have always worn in India except that for a very short period in India I fell an easy prey in common with the rest of my countrymen to the wearing of semi-European dress in the courts and elsewhere outside Kathiawar. I appeared before the Kathiawar courts now 21 years ago in precisely the dress I wear in Champaran.

One change I have made and it is that, having taken to the occupation of weaving and agriculture and having taken the vow of *Swadeshi*, my clothing is now entirely hand-woven and hand-sewn and made by me or my fellow-workers. Mr. Irwin's letter suggests that I appear before the ryots in a dress I have temporarily and specially adopted in Champaran to produce an effect. The fact is, that I wear the national dress because it is the most natural and the most becoming for an Indian. I believe that our copying of the European dress is a sign of our degradation, humiliation and our weakness, and that we are committing a national sin in discarding a dress which is best suited to the Indian climate and which, for its

simplicity, art and cheapness, is not to be beaten on the face of the earth and which answers hygienic requirements. Had it not been for a false pride and equally false notions of prestige, Englishmen here would long ago have adopted the Indian costume. I may mention incidentally that I do not go about Champaran bare headed. I do avoid shoes for sacred reasons. But I find too that it is more natural and healthier to avoid them whenever possible.

I am sorry to inform Mr. Irwin and your readers that my esteemed friend Babu Brijakishore Prasad, the ex-Hon. Member of Council, still remains unregenerate and retains the provincial cap and never walks barefoot and kicks up a terrible noise even in the house we are living in by wearing wooden sandals. He has still not the courage, inspite of most admirable contact with me, to discard his semi-anglicised dress and whenever he goes to see officials, he puts his legs into the bifurcated garment and on his own admission tortures himself by cramping his feet in inelastic shoes. I cannot induce him to believe that his clients won't desert him and the courts won't punish him if he wore his more becoming and less expensive *dhoti*. I invite you and Mr. Irwin not to believe the stories that the latter hears about me and my friends, but to join me in the crusade against educated Indians abandoning their manners, habits and customs which are not proved to be bad or harmful. Finally, I venture to warn you and Mr. Irwin that you and he will ill-serve the cause both of you consider is in danger by reason of my presence in Champaran if you continue, as you have done, to base your strictures on unproved facts. I ask you to accept my assurance that I should deem myself unworthy of the friendship and confidence of hundreds of my English friends and associates—not all of them fellow-cranks—if in similar circumstances I acted towards them differently from my own countrymen.

## HINDI: THE NATIONAL LANGUAGE FOR INDIA

The following are extracts from the Presidential Address to the Second Gujarat Educational Conference held at Broach in October 20, 1917, specially translated for the *Indian Review*.

It behoves us to devote attention to a consideration of a national language, as we have done to that of the medium of instruction. If English is to become a national language, it ought to be treated as a compulsory subject. Can English become the national language? Some learned patriots contend that even to raise the question betrays ignorance. In their opinion, English already occupies that place. His Excellency the Viceroy in his recent utterance has merely expressed a hope that English will occupy that place. His enthusiasm does not take him as far as that of the former. His Excellency believes that English will day after day command a larger place, will permeate the family circle, and at last rise to the status of a national language. A superficial consideration will support the Viceregal contention. The condition of our educated classes gives one the impression that all our activities would come to a stand still if we stop the use of English. And yet deeper thought will show that English can never and ought not to become the national language of India. What is the test of a national language?

- (1) For the official class it should be easy to learn.
- (2) The religious, commercial and political activity throughout India should be possible in that language.
- (3) It should be the speech of the majority of the inhabitants of India.
- (4) For the whole of the country it should be easy to learn.
- (5) In considering the question, weight ought not to be put upon momentary or shortlived conditions.

The English language does not fulfil any of the conditions above named. The first ought to have been the last, but I have purposely given it the first place, because that condition alone gives the appearance of being applicable to the English language. But upon further consideration we should find that for the officials even at the present moment it is not an easy language to learn. In our scheme of administration, it is assumed that the number of English officials will progressively decrease, so that in the end only the Viceroy and others whom one may count on one's finger-tips will be English. The majority are of Indian nationality to-day, and their number must increase.

And every one will admit that for them, English is more difficult to be learnt than any Indian language. Upon an examination of the second condition, we find that until the public at large can speak English, religious activity through that tongue is an impossibility. And a spread of English to that extent among the masses seems also impossible.

English cannot satisfy the third condition, because the majority in India do not speak it.

The fourth, too, cannot be satisfied by English, because it is not an easy language to learn for the whole of India.

Considering the last condition we observe that the position that English occupies to-day is momentary. The permanent condition is that there will be little necessity for English in the national affairs. It will certainly be required for imperial affairs. That, therefore, it will be an imperial language, the language of diplomacy, is a different question. On that purpose its knowledge is a necessity. We are not jealous of English. All

that is contended for is, that it ought not to be allowed to go beyond its proper sphere. And as it will be the imperial language, we shall compel our Malaviyajis, our Shastriars and our Banerjeas to learn it. And we shall feel assured that they will advertise the greatness of India in other parts of the world. But English cannot become the national language of India. To give it that place is like an attempt to introduce Esperanto. In my opinion, it is nomanly even to think that English can become our national language. The attempt to introduce Esperanto merely betrays ignorance. Then which is the language that satisfies all the five conditions? We shall be obliged to admit that Hindi satisfies all those conditions.

I call that language Hindi which Hindus and Mahomedans in the North speak and write, either in the Devanagari or the Urdu character. Exception has been taken to this definition. It seems to be argued that Hindi and Urdu are different languages. This is not a valid argument. In the Northern parts of India, Mussalmans and Hindus speak the same language. The literate classes have created a division. The learned Hindus have Sanskritised Hindi. The Mussalmans, therefore, cannot understand it. The Moslems of Lucknow have Persianised their speech and made it unintelligible to the Hindus. These represent two excesses of the same language. They find no common place in the speech of the masses. I have lived in the North. I have freely mixed with Hindus and Mahomedans, and although I have but a poor knowledge of Hindi, I have never found any difficulty in holding communion with them. Call the language of the North what you will, Urdu or Hindi, it is the same. If you write it in the Urdu character, you may know it as



Urdu. Write the same thing in the Nagari character and it is Hindi.

There, therefore, remains a difference about the script. For the time being, Mahomedan children will certainly write in the Urdu character, and Hindus will mostly write in the Devangari. I say mostly, because thousands of Hindus use the Urdu character and some do not even know the Nagari character. But when Hindus and Mahomedans come to regard one another without suspicion, when the causes begetting suspicion are removed, that script which has greater vitality will be more universally used and, therefore, become the national script. Meanwhile those Hindus and Mahomedans who desire to write their petitions in the Urdu character, should be free to do so and should have the right of having them accepted at the seat of National Government.

There is not another language capable of competing with Hindi in satisfying the five conditions. Bengali comes next to Hindi. But the Bengalis themselves make use of Hindi outside Bengal. No one wonders to see a Hindi-speaking man making use of Hindi, no matter where he goes. Hindu preachers and Mahomedan Moulvis deliver their religious discourses throughout India in Hindi and Urdu and even the illiterate masses follow them. Even the unlettered Gujarati going to the North, attempts to use a few Hindi words whereas a gate-keeper from the North declines to speak in Gujarati even to his employer, who has on that account to speak to him in broken Hindi. I have heard Hindi spoken even in the Dravid country. It is not true to say that in Madras one can go on with English. Even there I have employed Hindi with effect.

In the trains I have heard Madras passengers undoubtedly use Hindi. It is worthy of note that Mahomedans throughout India speak Urdu and they are to be found in large numbers in every Province. Thus Hindi is destined to be the national language. We have made use of it as such in times gone by. The rise of Urdu itself is due to that fact. The Mahomedan kings were unable to make Persian or Arabic the national language. They accepted the Hindi grammar, but employed the Urdu character and Persian words in their speeches. They could not, however, carry on their intercourse with the masses through a foreign tongue. All this is not unknown to the English. Those who know anything of the sepoys, know that for them military terms have had to be prepared in Hindi or Urdu.

Thus we see that Hindi alone can become the national language. It presents some difficulty in the case of the learned classes in Madras. For men from the Deccan, Gujarat, Sind and Bengal it is easy enough. In a few months they can acquire sufficient command over Hindi to enable them to carry on national intercourse in that tongue. It is not so for the Tamils. The Dravidian languages are distinct from their Sanskrit sister in structure and grammar. The only thing common to the two groups is their Sanskrit vocabulary to an extent. But the difficulty is confined to the learned class alone. We have a right to appeal to their patriotic spirit and expect them to put forth sufficient effort in order to learn Hindi. For in future when Hindi has received State recognition, it will be introduced as a compulsory language in Madras as in other Provinces, and intercourse between Madras and them will then increase. English has not permeated the Dravidian masses. Hindi, however, will take no time. The Telugus are making an effort in that direction even now. If this Conference can come to an unanimous conclusion as to a national language, it will be necessary to devise means to attain that end.

## GUJARAT POLITICAL CONFERENCE

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The following is an English translation of Mr. Gandhi's Presidential Address to the First Gujarat Political Conference, held at Godhra, on November 3, 1917:

Brothers and Sisters,— I am thankful to you all for the exalted position to which you have called me. I am but a baby of two years and a half in Indian politics. I cannot trade, here, on my experience in South Africa. I know that acceptance of the position is to a certain extent an impertinence. And yet I have been unable to resist the pressure your overwhelming affection has exerted upon me.

I am conscious of my responsibility. This Conference is the first of its kind in Gujarat. The time is most critical for the whole of India. The empire is labouring under a strain never before experienced. My views do not quite take the general course. I feel that some of them run in the opposite direction. Under the circumstances, I can hardly claim this privileged position. The president of a meeting is usually its spokesman. I cannot pretend to lay any such claim. It is your kindness that gives me such a unique opportunity of placing my thoughts before the Gujarat public. I do not see anything wrong in these views being subjected to criticism, dissent, and even emphatic protest. I would like them to be freely discussed. I will only say with regard to them that they were not formed to-day or yesterday. But they were formed years ago. I am enamoured of them, and my Indian experience of two years and a half has not altered them.

I congratulate the originators of the proposal to hold this Conference as also those friends who have reduced it to practice. It is a most important event for Gujarat. It is possible for us to make it yield most important results. This Conference is in the nature of a foundation, and if it is well and truly laid, we need have no anxiety as to the superstructure. Being the first progenitor, its responsibility is great. I pray that God will bless us with wisdom and that our deliberations will benefit the people.

This is a political conference. Let us pause a moment over the word "political". It is, as a rule, used in a restricted sense, but I believe it is better to give it a wider meaning. If the work of such a conference were to be confined to a consideration of the relations between the rulers and the ruled, it would not only be incomplete but we should even fail to have an adequate conception of those relations. For instance, the question of Mhowra flowers is of great importance for a part of Gujarat. If it is considered merely as a question between the Government and the people, it might lead to an untoward end, or even to one never desired by us. If we considered the genesis of the law on Mhowra flowers and also appreciated our duty in the matter, we would very probably succeed sooner in our fight with Government than otherwise, and we would easily discover the key to successful agitation. You will more clearly perceive my interpretation of the word "political" in the light of the views now being laid before you.

Conferences do not, as a rule, after the end of their deliberations, appear to leave behind them an executive body, and even when such a body is appointed, it is, to use the language of the late Mr. Gokhale, composed of

men who are amateurs. What is wanted, in order to give effect to the resolutions of such conferences, is men who would make it their business to do so. If such men come forward in great numbers, then and then only will such conferences be a credit to the country and produce lasting results. At present there is much waste of energy. It is desirable that there were many institutions of the type of the Servants of India Society. Only when men fired with the belief that service is the highest religion, come forward in great numbers, only then could we hope to see great results. Fortunately, the religious spirit still binds India, and if during the present age the service of the Motherland becomes the end of religion, men and women of religion in large numbers would take part in our public life. When sages and saints take up this work, India will easily achieve her cherished aims. At all events, it is incumbent on us that for the purposes of this Conference we formed an executive committee whose business it would be to enforce its resolutions.

The sound of *Swaraj* pervades the Indian air. It is due to Mrs. Besant that *Swaraj* is on the lips of hundreds of thousands of men and women. What was unknown to men and women only two years ago, has, by her consummate tact and her indefatigable efforts, become common property for them. There cannot be the slightest doubt that her name will take the first rank in history among those who inspired us with the hope that *Swaraj* was attainable at no distant date. *Swaraj* was, and is, the goal of the Congress. The idea did not originate with her. But the credit of presenting it to us as an easily attainable goal belongs to that lady alone. For that we could hardly thank her enough. By releasing her and her associates :

Messrs. Arundale and Wadia, Government have laid us under an obligation, and at the same time acknowledged the just and reasonable nature of the agitation for *Swaraj*. It is desirable that Government should extend the same generosity towards our brothers, Mahomed Ali and Shaukat Ali. It is no use discussing the appositeness or otherwise of what Sir William Vincent has said about them. It is to be hoped that the Government will accede to the peoples' desire for their release and thus make them responsible for any improper result that might flow from their release. Such clemency will make them all the more grateful to the Government. The act of generosity will be incomplete so long as these brothers are not released. The grant of freedom to the brothers will gladden the peoples' hearts and endear the Government to them.

Mr. Montagu will shortly be in our midst. The work of taking signatures to the petition to be submitted to him is going on apace. The chief object of this petition is to educate the people about *Swaraj*. To say that a knowledge of letters is essential to obtain *Swaraj*, betrays ignorance of history. A knowledge of letters is not necessary to inculcate among people the idea that we ought to manage our own affairs. What is essential, is the grasp of such an idea. People have to desire *Swaraj*. Hundreds of unlettered kings have ruled kingdoms in an effective manner. To see how far such an idea exists in the minds of the people, and to try to create it where it is absent, is the object of this petition. It is desirable that millions of men and women should sign it intelligently. That such a largely signed petition will have its due weight with Mr. Montagu is its natural result.

No one has the right to alter the scheme of reforms approved by the Congress and the Moslem League, and

one need not, therefore, go into the merits thereof. For our present purposes, we have to understand thoroughly the scheme formulated most thoughtfully by our leaders and to faithfully do the things necessary to get it accepted and enforced.

This scheme is not *Swaraj*, but is a great step towards *Swaraj*. Some English critics tell us that we have no right to enjoy *Swaraj*, because the class that demands it is incapable of defending India. "Is the defence of India to rest with the English alone," they ask, "and are the reins of Government to be in the hands of the Indians? Now this is a question which excites both laughter and sorrow. It is laughable, because our English friends fancy that they are not of us, whilst our plan of *Swaraj* is based upon retention of the British connection. We do not expect the English settlers to leave this country. They will be our partners in *Swaraj*. And they need not grumble if in such a scheme the burden of the defence of the country falls on them. They are however hasty in assuming that we shall not do our share of defending the country. When India decides upon qualifying herself for the act of soldiering, she will attain to it in no time. We have but to harden our feelings to be able to strike. To cultivate a hardened feeling does not take ages. It grows like weeds. The question has also its tragic side, because it puts us in mind of the fact that Government have up to now debarred us from military training. Had they been so minded they would have had at their disposal to-day, from among the educated classes, an army of trained soldiers. Government have to accept a larger measure of blame than the educated classes for the latter having taken little part in the war. Had the Government policy been shaped differently

from the very commencement, they would have to-day an unconquerable army. But let no one be blamed for the present situation. At the time British rule was established, it was considered to be a wise policy for the governance of crores of men to deprive them of arms and military training. But it is never too late to mend, and both the rulers and the ruled must immediately repair the omission.

In offering these views, I have assumed the propriety of the current trend of thought. To me, however, it does not appear to be tending altogether in the right direction. Our agitation is based on the Western model. The *Swaraj* we desire is of a Western type. As a result of it, India will have to enter into competition with the Western nations. Many believe that there is no escape from it. I do not think so. I cannot forget that India is not Europe, India is not Japan, India is not China. The divine word that "India alone is the land of *Karma*" (Action), the rest is the land of *Bhoga* (Enjoyment), is indelibly imprinted on my mind. I feel that India's mission is different from that of the others. India is fitted for the religious supremacy of the world. There is no parallel in the world for the process of purification that this country has voluntarily undergone. India is less in need of steel weapons, it has fought with divine weapons; it can still do so. Other nations have been votaries of brute force. The terrible war going on in Europe furnishes a forcible illustration of the truth. India can win all by soul force. History supplies numerous instances to prove that brute force is as nothing before soul force. Poets have sung about it and *Seers* have described their experiences. A thirty-year old Hercules behaves like a lamb before his eighty-year old father.



This is an instance of love force. Love is *Atman*; it is its attribute. If we have faith enough, we can wield that force over the whole world. Religion having lost its hold on us, we are without an anchor to keep us firm amidst the storm of modern civilisation and are therefore being tossed to and fro. Enough, however, of this for the present. I shall return to it at a later stage.

In spite of my views being as I have just described them, I do not hesitate to take part in the *Swaraj* movement, for India is being governed in accordance with the Western system, and even the Government admit that the British Parliament presents the best type of that system. Without parliamentary government, we should be nowhere. Mrs. Beasant is only too true when she says that we shall soon be facing a hunger-strike if we do not have Home Rule. I do not want to go into statistics. The evidence of my eyes is enough for me. Poverty in India is deepening day by day. No other result is possible. A country that exports its raw produce and imports it after it has undergone manufacturing processes, a country that in spite of growing its own cotton, has to pay crores of rupees for its imported cloth, cannot be otherwise than poor. It can only be said of a poor country that its people are spendthrifts, because they ungrudgingly spend money in marriage and such other ceremonies. It must be a terribly poor country that cannot afford to spend enough in carrying out improvements for stamping out epidemics like the plague. The poverty of a country must continuously grow when the salaries of its highly paid officials are spent outside it. Surely it must be India's keen poverty that compels its people, during cold weather for want of woollen clothing, to burn their precious manure

in order to warm themselves. Throughout my wanderings in India, I have rarely seen a buoyant face. The middle classes are groaning under the weight of awful distress. For the lowest order there is no hope. They do not know a bright day. It is a pure fiction to say that India's riches are buried under ground, or are to be found in her ornaments. What there is of such riches is of no consequence. The nation's expenditure has increased, not so its income. Government have not deliberately brought about this state of things. I believe that their intentions are pure. It is their honest opinion that the nation's prosperity is daily growing. Their faith in their Blue Books is immovable. It is only too true that statistics can be made to prove anything. The economists deduce India's prosperity from statistics. People like me who appreciate the popular way of examining figures shake their heads over blue-book statistics. If the gods were to come down and testify otherwise, I would insist on saying that I see India growing poorer.

What then would our Parliament do? When we have it, we would have a right to commit blunders and to correct them. In the early stages we are bound to make blunders. But we being children of the soil, won't lose time in setting ourselves right. We shall, therefore, soon find out remedies against poverty. Then our existence won't be dependent on Lancashire goods. Then we shall not be found spending untold riches on Imperial Delhi. It will, then, bear some correspondence to the peasant cottage. There will be some proportion observed between that cottage and our Parliament House. "The nation to-day is in a helpless condition, it does not possess even the right to err. He who has no right to err, can never go forward." The history of the Commons is a

history of blunders. Man, says an Arabian proverb, is error personified. "Freedom to err and the duty of correcting errors is one definition of *Swaraj*. And such *Swaraj* lies in Parliament. That Parliament we need to-day. We are fitted for it to-day. We shall, therefore, get it on demand. It rests with us to define "to-day". *Swaraj* is not to be attained through an appeal to the British democracy. The English nation cannot appreciate such an appeal. Its reply will be: "We never sought outside help to obtain *Swaraj*. We have received it through our own ability. You have not received it, because you are unfit. When you are fit for it, nobody can withhold it from you." How then shall we fit ourselves for it? We have to demand *Swaraj* from our own democracy. Our appeal must be to it. When the peasantry of India understand what *Swaraj* is, the demand will become irresistible. The late Sir W. W. Hunter used to say that in the British system, victory on the battle-field was the shortest cut to success. If educated India could have taken its full share in the war, I am certain that we would not only have reached our goal already, but the manner of the grant would have been altogether unique. We often refer to the fact that many sepoys of Hindustan have lost their lives on the battle-fields of France and Mesopotamia. It is not possible for the educated classes to claim the credit for this event. It is not patriotism that had prompted those sepoys to go to the battle-field. They know nothing of *Swaraj*. At the end of the war they will not ask for it. They have gone to demonstrate that they are faithful to the salt they eat. In asking for *Swaraj*, I feel that it is not possible for us to bring into account their services. The only thing we can say is, that we may not be considered blameworthy

for our inability to take a large active part in the prosecution of the war.

That we have been loyal at a time of stress is no test of fitness for *Swaraj*. Loyalty is no merit. It is a necessity of citizenship all the world over. That loyalty can be no passport to *Swaraj* is a self-demonstrated maxim. Our fitness lies in that we now keenly desire *Swaraj*, and in the conviction we have reached that bureaucracy, although it has served India with pure intentions, has had its day. And this kind of fitness is sufficient for our purpose. Without *Swaraj* there is now no possibility of peace in India.

But if we confine our activities for advancing *Swaraj* only to holding meetings, the nation is likely to suffer harm. Meetings and speeches have their own place and time. But they cannot make a Nation.

In a nation fired with *Swaraj* zeal, we shall observe an awakening in all departments of life. The first step to *Swaraj* lies in the individual. The great truth: "As with the individual so with the universe," is applicable here as elsewhere. If we are ever torn by conflict from within, if we are ever going astray, and if instead of ruling our passions we allow them to rule us, *Swaraj* can have no meaning for us. Government of self, then, is primary education in the school of *Swaraj*.

Then the Family. If dissensions reign supreme in our families, if brothers fight among themselves, if joint families, i.e., families enjoying self-government, become divided through family quarrels, and if we are unfit even for such restricted *Swaraj*, how can we be considered fit for the larger *Swaraj*?

Now for the Caste. If caste-fellows become jealous of one another, if the castes cannot regulate their affairs

in an orderly manner, if the elders want to usurp power, if the members become self-opinionated and thus show their unfitness for tribal self-government, how can they be fit for national self-government?

After caste the City Life. If we cannot regulate the affairs of our cities, if our streets are not kept clean, if our homes are dilapidated and if our roads are crooked, if we cannot command the services of selfless citizens for civic government, and those who are in charge of affairs are neglectful or selfish, how shall we claim larger powers? The way to national life lies through the cities. It is, therefore, necessary to linger a little longer on civic government.

The plague has found a home in India. Cholera has been always with us. Malaria takes an annual toll of thousands. The plague has been driven out from every other part of the world. Glasgow drove it out as soon as it entered it. In Johannesburg it could appear but once. Its municipality made a great effort and stamped it out within a month whereas we are able to produce little impression upon it. We cannot blame the Government for this state of things. In reality we cannot make our poverty answerable for it. None can interfere with us in the prosecution of any remedies that we might wish to adopt. Ahmedabad, for instance, cannot evade responsibility by pleading poverty. I fear that in respect of the plague we must shoulder the whole responsibility. It is a matter of wonderment that when the plague is working havoc in our rural quarters, cantonments, as a rule, remain free. Reasons for such immunity are obvious. In the cantonments the atmosphere is pure, houses detached, roads are wide and clean, the sanitary habits of the

residents are exceptionally sound. Whereas ours are as unhygienic as they well could be. Our closets are pestilentially dirty. Ninety per cent. of our population go barefoot, people spit anywhere, perform natural functions anywhere and are obliged to walk along roads and paths thus dirtied. It is no wonder that the plague has found a home in our midst.

Unless we alter the conditions of our cities, rid ourselves of dirty habits and reform our castes, *Swaraj* for us can have no value.

It will not be considered out of place here to refer to the condition of the so-called untouchables. The result of considering the most useful members of society as unworthy of being even touched by us, has been that we let them clean only a part of our closets. In the name of religion we ourselves would not clean the remainder for fear of pollution and so, in spite of personal cleanliness, a portion of our houses remains the dirtiest in the world, with the result that we are brought up in an atmosphere which is laden with disease germs. We were safe so long as we kept to our villages. But in the cities we ever commit suicide by reason of our insanitary habits.

Where many die before their death, there is every probability that people are devoid of both religion and its practice. I believe that it ought not to be beyond us to banish the plague from India, and if we could do so, we shall have increased our fitness for *Swaraj*, as it could not be by agitation, no matter howsoever great. This is a question meriting the serious consideration of our doctors and *vaidyas*.

Our sacred *Dakorji* is our next door neighbour. I have visited that holy place. Its unholiness is limitless. I consider myself a devout Vaishnavite. I claim, therefore,

a special privilege of criticising the condition of Dakorji. The insanitation of that place is so great that one used to hygienic conditions can hardly bear to pass even twenty-four hours there. The pilgrims are permitted to pollute the tank and the streets as they choose. The keepers of the idol quarrel among themselves and, to add insult to injury, a Receiver has been appointed to take charge of the jewellery and costly robes of the idol. It is our clear duty to set this wrong right. How shall we, Gujaratis, bent on attaining *Swaraj*, discharge ourselves in its army if we cannot sweep our houses clean?

The inconsideration of the state of education in our cities also fills us with despondency. It is up to us to provide, by private effort, for the education of the masses. But our gaze is fixed upon Government whilst our children are starving for want of education.

In the cities the drink-evil is on the increase, tea-shops are multiplying, gambling is rampant. If we cannot remedy these evils, how should we attain *Swaraj* whose meaning is government of ourselves?

We have reached a time when we and our children are likely to be deprived of our milk-supply. Dairies in Gujarat are doing us infinite harm. They buy out practically the whole milk-supply and sell its products, butter, cheese, etc., in a wider market. How can a nation whose nourishment is chiefly derived from milk, allow this important article of food to be thus exploited? How can men be heedless of the national health and think of enriching themselves by such an improper use of this article of diet? Milk and its products are of such paramount value to the nation that they deserve to be controlled by the municipalities. What are we doing about them?

I have just returned from the scene of Bakr-Id riots. For an insignificant cause, the two communities quarrelled, mischievous men took advantage of it, and a mere spark became a blaze. We were found to be helpless. We have been obliged to depend only upon Government assistance. This is a significant illustration of the condition I am trying to describe.

It will not be inopportune to dwell for a moment on the question of cow-protection. It is an important question. And yet it is entrusted to the so-called cow-protection societies. The protection of cows is an old custom. It has originated in the necessity of the condition of the country. Protection of its cows is incumbent upon a country, 73 per cent. of whose population lives upon agriculture and uses only bullocks for it. In such a country even meat-eaters should abstain from beef-eating. These natural causes should be enough justification for not killing cows. But here we have to face a peculiar situation. The chief meaning of cow-protection seems to be to prevent cows from going into the hands of our Mussalman brethren and being used as food. The governing class seem to need beef. In their behalf thousands of cows are slaughtered daily. We take no steps to prevent the slaughter. We hardly make any attempt to prevent the cruel torture of cows by certain Hindu dairies of Calcutta, which subject them to certain indescribable practices and make them yield the last drop of milk. In Gujarat, Hindu drivers use spiked sticks to goad bullocks into action. We say nothing about it. The bullocks of our cities are to be seen in a pitiable condition. Indeed, protection of the cow and her progeny is a very great problem. With us it has



degenerated into a pretext for quarrelling with the Mahomedans, and we have thus contributed to a further slaughter of cows. It is not religion, but want of it, to kill a Mahomedan brother who declines to part with his cow. I feel sure that if we were to negotiate with our Mussalman brothers upon a basis of love, they will appreciate the peculiar condition of India and readily co-operate with us in the protection of cows. By courtesy and even by *satyagraha* we can engage them in that mission. But in order to be able to do this, we shall have to understand the question in its true bearing. We shall have to prepare rather to die than to kill. But we shall be able to do this only when we understand the real value of the cow and have pure love for her. Many ends will be automatically served in achieving this one end. Hindus and Mahomedans will live in peace, milk and its products will be available in a pure condition and will be cheaper than now, and our hullocks will become the envy of the world. By real *tapasya*, it is possible for us to stop cow slaughter whether by the English, Mahomedans or Hindus. This one act will bring *Swaraj* many a step nearer.

Many of the foregoing problems belong to municipal government. We can, therefore, clearly see that "national government is dependent upon purity of the government of our cities".

It will not be considered an improper statement to say that the *Swadeshi* movement is in an inane condition. We do not realise that *Swaraj* is almost wholly obtainable through *Swadeshi*. If we have no regard for our respective vernaculars, if we dislike our clothes, if our dress repels us, if we are ashamed to wear the sacred *Shikha*, if our food is distasteful to us, our climate is not

good enough, our people uncouth and unfit for our company, our civilisation faulty and the foreign attractive, in short, if everything native is bad and everything foreign pleasing to us, I should not know what *Swaraj* can mean for us. If everything foreign is to be adopted, surely it will be necessary for us to continue long under foreign tutelage, because foreign civilisation has not permeated the masses. It seems to me that, before we can appreciate *Swaraj*, we should have not only love but passion for *Swadeshi*. Every one of our acts should bear the *Swadeshi* stamp. *Swaraj* can only be built upon the assumption that most of what is national is on the whole sound. If the view here put forth be correct, the *Swadeshi* movement ought to be carried on vigorously. Every country that has carried on the *Swaraj* movement has fully appreciated the *Swadeshi* spirit. The Scotch Highlanders hold on to their kilts even at the risk of their lives. We humorously call the Highlanders the "petticoat brigade". But the whole world testifies to the strength that lies behind that petticoat and the Highlanders of Scotland will not abandon it even though it is an inconvenient dress and an easy target for the enemy. The object in developing the foregoing argument is not that we should treasure our faults but that what is national, even though comparatively less agreeable, should be adhered to, and that what is foreign should be avoided, though it may be more agreeable than our own. That which is wanting in our civilisation can be supplied by proper effort on our part. I do hope that the *Swadeshi* spirit will possess every member in this assembly, and that we would carry out the *Swadeshi* vow in spite of great difficulties and inconvenience. Then *Swaraj* will be easy of attainment.

The foregoing illustrations go to show that our movement should be twofold. We may petition the government, we may agitate in the Imperial Council for our rights, but for a real awakening of the people, internal activity is more important. There is likelihood of hypocrisy and selfishness tainting external activity. There is less danger of such a catastrophe in the internal activity. Not only will external activity, without being balanced by the internal, lack grace, but it is likely to be barren of results. It is not my contention that we have no internal activity at all, but I submit we do not lay enough stress upon it.

One sometimes hears it said: "Let us get the government of India in our own hands and everything will be all right." There could be no greater superstition than this. No nation has thus gained its independence. The splendour of the spring is reflected in every tree, the whole earth is then filled with the freshness of youth. Similarly, when the *Swaraj* spirit has really permeated society, a stranger suddenly come upon us will observe energy in every walk of life, he will find national servants engaged, each according to his own abilities, in a variety of public activities.

If we admit that our progress has not been what it might have been, we shall have to admit two reasons for it: We have kept our women strangers to these activities of ours and have thus brought about paralysis of half the national limb. The nation walks with one leg only. All its work appears to be only half or incompletely done. Moreover, the learned section having received its education through a foreign tongue, has become enervated and it is unable to give the nation the benefit of such ability as it possesses. I need not

reiterate my views on this subject as I have elaborated them in my address delivered before the Gujarat Educational Conference. It is a wise decision, that of conducting the proceedings of this Conference in Gujarati and I hope that all Gujaratis will adhere to the determination and resist every temptation to alter it.

The educated class, lovers of *Swaraj*, must freely mix with the masses. We dare not reject a single member of the community. We shall make progress only if we carry all with us. Had the educated class identified itself with the masses, Bakr-Id riots would have been an impossibility. \* \* \* \* \*

I now reach the concluding topic. There are two methods of attaining desired end: Truthful and Truthless. In our scriptures they have been described respectively as divine and devilish. In the path of *Satyagraha* there is always unflinching adherence to Truth. It is never to be forsaken on any account, not even for the sake of one's country. The final triumph of Truth is always assumed for the divine method. Its votary does not abandon it, even though at times the path seems impenetrable and beset with difficulties and dangers, and a departure however slight from that straight path may appear full of promise. His faith even then shines resplendent like the midday sun and he does not despond. With truth for sword, he needs neither steel nor gunpowder. He conquers the enemy by the force of the soul, which is Love. Its test is not to be found among friends. There is neither newness, nor merit nor yet effort in a friend loving a friend. It is tested truly when it is bestowed on the so-called enemy: it then becomes a virtue, there is effort in it, it is an act of manliness and real bravery. We can adopt

this method towards the Government and in doing so, we should be in a position to appreciate their beneficial activities and with greater ease correct their errors, because we should draw attention to them not in anger but in Love. Love does not act through fear. There can, therefore, be no weakness in its expression. A coward is incapable of exhibiting Love, it is the prerogative of the brave. Following this method, we shall not look upon all Governmental activity with suspicion, we shall not ascribe bad motives to them. And our examination of their actions, being directed by Love, will be unerring and is bound, therefore, to carry conviction with them.

Love has its struggles. In the intoxication of power, man often fails to detect his mistakes. When that happens, a passive resister does not sit still. He suffers. He disobeys the ruler's laws and orders in a civil manner and willingly incurs hardships caused by such disobedience, *e.g.*, imprisonment and gallows. Thus is the soul disciplined. Here there is no waste of energy, and any untoward results of such respectful disobedience are suffered merely by him and his companions. A passive resister is not at sixes and sevens with those in power but the latter willingly yield to him. "They know that they cannot effectively exercise force against the passive resister. Without his concurrence they cannot make him do their will. And this is the full fruition of *Swaraj*, because in it is complete independence." It need not be taken for granted that such decorous resistance is possible only in respect of civilised rulers. Even a heart of flint will melt in front of a fire kindled by the power of the soul. Even a Nero becomes a lamb when he faces Love. This is no exaggeration. It is as true as an algebraical equation. This

*Satyagraha* is India's special weapon. It has had others but *Satyagraha* has commanded greater attention. It is omnipresent and is capable of being used at all times and under all circumstances. It does not require a Congress license. He who knows its power cannot help using it. Even as the eye-lashes automatically protect the eyes, so does *Satyagraha*, when kindled automatically, protect the freedom of the soul.

But truthlessness has opposite attributes. The terrible war going on in Europe is a case in point. Why should a nation's cause be considered right and another's wrong because it overpowers the latter by sheer brute force? The strong are often seen preying upon the weak. The wrongness of the latter's cause is not to be inferred from their defeat in a trial of brute strength, nor is the rightness of the strong to be inferred from their success in such a trial. The wielder of brute force does not scruple about the means to be used. He does not question the propriety of means if he can somehow achieve his purpose. This is not *Dharma*, it is *Adharma*. In *Dharma*, there cannot be a particle of untruth, cruelty or the taking of life. The measure of *Dharma* is the measure of love, kindness, truth. Heaven itself is no acceptable exchange for them. *Swaraj* itself is useless at the sacrifice of Truth. Sacrifice of Truth is the foundation of a nation's destruction. The believer in brute force becomes impatient and desires the death of the so-called enemy. There can be but one result of such an activity. Hatred increases. The defeated party vows vengeance and simply bides his time. Thus does the spirit of revenge descend from father to son. It is much to be wished that India may not give predominance to the worship of brute force. If the members of this Assembly will deliberately accept *Satyagraha* in laying

down its own programme, they will reach their goal all the easier for it. They may have to face disappointment in the initial stages. They may not see results for a time. But *Satyagraha* will triumph in the end. The brute-force-man, like the oilman's ox, moves in a circle. It is a motion, but it is not progress. Whereas the votary of Truth force ever moves forward.

A superficial critic reading the foregoing is likely to conclude that the views herein expressed are mutually destructive. On the one hand I appeal to the Government to give military training to the people. On the other I put *Satyagraha* on the pedestal. Surely there can be no room for the use of arms in *Satyagraha*, nor is there any. But military training is intended for those who do not believe in *Satyagraha*. That the whole of India will ever accept *Satyagraha* is beyond my imagination. Not to defend the weak is an entirely effeminate idea, everywhere to be rejected. In order to protect our innocent sister from the brutal designs of a man, we ought to offer ourselves a willing sacrifice and by the force of Love conquer the brute in the man. But if we have not attained that power, we would certainly use up all our bodily strength in order to frustrate those designs. The votaries of soul force and brute force are both soldiers. The latter, bereft of his arms, acknowledges defeat, the former does not know what defeat is. He does not depend upon the perishable body and its weapons, but he derives his strength from the unconquerable and immortal soul. The thing outside the two is not a man, for he does not recognise the Dweller within him. If he did, he would not take fright and run away from danger. Like a miser trying to save his flesh, he loses all, he does not know how to die. But the

armoured soldier always has death by him as a companion. There is hope of his becoming a passive resister, and one has a right to hope that India, the holy land of the gods, will ever give the predominant place to the divine force rather than to the brute force. Might is right is a formula which, let us hope, will never find acceptance in India. Her formula is, Truth alone conquers.

Upon reflection we find that we can employ *Satyagraha* even for a social reform. We can rid ourselves of many defects in our social institutions. We can settle the Hindu-Mohammedan problem, and we can deal with political questions. It is well that for the sake of facilitating progress we divide our activities according to the subjects handled. But it should never be forgotten that all are inter-related. It is not true to say that neither religion nor social reform has anything to do with politics. The result obtained by bringing religion into play in the consideration of political subjects will be different from that obtained without it. The Hindus can ill afford to neglect 56 lakhs of ignorant *Sadhus* in considering political matters. Our Mussalman brethren cannot lose sight of their *Fakeers*. In advancing political progress, the condition of our widows and child marriages must have their proper place, and the *purdah* must tax Mussalman wit. Nor can we, Hindus and Muhammedans, in considering politics shut our eyes to scores of questions that arise between us.

Indeed, our difficulties are like the Himalayas. But we have equally powerful means at our disposal for removing them. We are children of an ancient nation. We have witnessed the burial of civilizations, those of Rome, Greece, and Egypt. Our civilization abides even



as the ocean in spite of its ebbs and flows. We have all we need to keep ourselves independent. We have the mountains that kiss the sky, we have the mighty rivers. We have the matchless beauties of Nature and we have handed down to us a heritage of deeds of valour. This country is the treasure-house of *tapasya*. In this country alone do people belonging to different religions live together in amity. In this country alone do all the gods receive their due measure of worship. We shall disgrace our heritage, and our connection with the British nation will be vain if, in spite of such splendid equipment by some unique effort, we do not conquer our conquerors. The English nation is full of adventure, the religious spirit guides it, it has unquenchable faith in itself, it is a nation of great soldiers, it treasures its independence, but it has given the place of honour to its commercial instinct, it has not always narrowly examined the means adopted for seeking wealth. It worships modern civilisation. The ancient ideals have lost their hold upon it. If therefore, instead of imitating that nation, we do not forget our past, we have real regard for our civilisation, we have firm faith in its supremacy, we shall be able to make a proper use of our connection with the British nation and make it beneficial to ourselves, to them and to the whole world. I pray to the Almighty that this Assembly, taking its full share of this great work, may shed lustre upon itself, upon Gujarat, and upon the whole of *Bharatavarsha*.

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## ON WOMANHOOD

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The annual gathering of the Bombay Bhagini Samaj was held on Wednesday, February 20, 1918, at the Morarji Gokuldas Hall, under the presidency of Mr. M. K. Gandhi. The annual report of the Samaj having been read by the General Secretary, the President distributed prizes to the pupils of the female classes and delivered a very informing address on the education of women, in the course of which he said:

It is necessary to understand what we mean when we talk of the regeneration of women. It presupposes degeneration and if that is so, we should further consider what led to it and how. It is our primary duty to have some very hard thinking on these points. In travelling all over India, I have come to realize that all the existing agitation is confined to an infinitesimal section of our people who are really a mere speck in the vast firmament. Crores of people of both the sexes live in absolute ignorance of this agitation. Full eighty-five per cent. of the people of this country pass their innocent days in a state of total detachment from what is going on around them. These men and women, ignorant as they are, do their bit in life well and properly. Both have the same education or rather the absence of education. Both are helping each other as they ought to do. If their lives are in any sense incomplete, the cause can be traced to the incompleteness of the lives of the remaining fifteen per cent. If my sisters of the Bhagini Samaj will make a close study of the lives of these 85 per cent. of our people, it will provide them ample material for an excellent programme of work for the Samaj.

### MAN-MADE SOCIAL LAWS

In the observations that I am going to make, I will confine myself to the 15 per cent. abovementioned and

even then it would be out of place to discuss the disabilities that are common both to men and women. The point for us to consider is the regeneration of our women relatively to our men. Legislation has been mostly the handiwork of men; and man has not always been fair and discriminate in performing that self-appointed task. The largest part of our effect in promoting the regeneration of women should be directed towards removing those blemishes which are represented in our *Shastras* as the necessary and ingrained characteristic of women. Who will attempt this and how? In my humble opinion in order to make the attempt, we will have to produce women pure, firm and self-controlled as Sita, Damayanti and Draupadi. If we do produce them, such modern sisters will receive the same homage from Hindu society as is being paid to their prototypes of yore. Their words will have the same authority as the *Shastras*. We will feel ashamed of the stray reflections on them in our *Smritis* and will soon forget them. Such revolutions have occurred in Hinduism in the past and will still take place in the future leading to the stability of our faith. I pray to God that this Association might soon produce such women as I have described above.

#### PLACE OF LITERARY EDUCATION

We have now discussed the root-cause of the degeneration of our women and have considered the ideals by the realization of which the present conditions of our women can be improved. The number of women who can realize those ideals will be necessarily very few and, therefore, we will now consider what ordinary women can accomplish if they would try. Their first attempt should be directed towards awakening in the minds of as many women as possible a proper sense

of their present condition. I am not among those who believe that such an effort can be made through literary education only. To work on that basis would be to postpone indefinitely the accomplishment of our aims; I have experienced at every step that it is not at all necessary to wait so long. We can bring home to our women the sad realities of their present condition without, in the first instance, giving them any literary education. Woman is the companion of man gifted with equal mental capacities. She has the right to participate in very minutest detail in the activities of man and she has an equal right of freedom and liberty with him. She is entitled to a supreme place in her own sphere of activity as man is in his. This ought to be the natural condition of thing and not as a result only of learning to read and write. By sheer force of a vicious custom, even the most ignorant and worthless men have been enjoying a superiority over women which they do not deserve and ought not to have. Many of our movements stop half way because of the condition of our women. Much of our work does not yield appropriate results; our lot is like that of the penny-wise and pound-foolish trader who does not employ enough capital in his business.

#### FAULTY SYSTEM OF EDUCATION

But although much good and useful work can be done without a knowledge of reading and writing, yet it is my firm belief that you cannot always do without a knowledge thereof. It develops and sharpens one's intellect and it stimulates our power of doing good. I have never placed an unnecessarily high value on the knowledge of reading and writing. I am only attempting to assign its proper place to it. I have pointed out from

time to time that there is no justification for men to deprive women or to deny to them equal rights on the ground of their illiteracy: but education is essential for enabling women to uphold these natural rights, to improve them and to spread them; again the true knowledge of self is unattainable by the millions who are without such education. Many a book is full of innocent pleasure and this will be denied to us without education. It is no exaggeration to say that a human being without education is not far removed from an animal. Education, therefore, is necessary for women as it is for men. Not that the methods of education should be identical in both cases. In the first place our State system of education is full of error and productive of harm in many respects. It should be eschewed by men and women alike. Even if it were free from its present blemishes, I would not regard it as proper for women from all points of view. Man and woman are of equal rank but they are not identical. They are a peerless pair being supplementary to one another; each helps the other, so what without the one the existence of the other cannot be conceived, and therefore it follows as a necessary corollary from these facts that anything that will impair the status of either of them will involve the equal ruin of them both. In framing any scheme of women's education this cardinal truth must be constantly kept in mind. Man is supreme in the outward activities of a married pair and therefore it is in the fitness of things that he should have a greater knowledge thereof. On the other hand, home life is entirely the sphere of woman and therefore in domestic affairs, in the upbringing and education of children, women ought to have more knowledge. Not that

knowledge should be divided into watertight compartments, or that some branches of knowledge should be closed to any one; but unless courses of instruction are based on a discriminating appreciation of these basic principles, the fullest life of man and woman cannot be developed.

#### IS EDUCATION NECESSARY?

I should say a word or two as to whether English education is or is not necessary for our women. I have come to the conclusion that in the ordinary course of our lives neither our men nor our women need necessarily have any knowledge of English. True, English is necessary for making a living and for active association in our political movements. I do not believe in women working for a living or undertaking commercial enterprises. The few women who may require or desire to have English education, can very easily have their way by joining the schools for men. To introduce English education in schools meant for women could only lead to prolong our helplessness. I have often read and heard people saying that the rich treasures of English literature should be opened alike to men and women. I submit in all humility that there is some misapprehension in assuming such an attitude. No one intends to close these treasures against women while keeping them open for men. There is none on earth able to prevent you from studying the literature of the whole world if you are fond of literary tastes. But when courses of education have been framed with the needs of a particular society in view, you cannot supply the requirements of the few who have cultivated a literary taste. In asking our men and women to spend less time in the study of English than they are doing now, my object is not to deprive them of the pleasure which they are likely to

derive from it, but I hold that the same pleasure can be obtained at less cost and trouble if we follow a more natural method. The world is full of many a gem of priceless beauty; but then these gems are not all of English setting. Other languages can well boast of productions of similar excellence; all these should be made available for our common people and that can only be done if our own learned men will undertake to translate them for us in our own languages.

#### UNSPEAKABLE SIN OF CHILD MARRIAGE

Merely to have outlined a scheme of education as above is not to have removed the bane of child marriage from our society or to have conferred on our women an equality of rights. Let us now consider the case of our girls who disappear, so to say, from view after marriage. They are not likely to return to our schools. Conscious of the unspeakable and unthinkable sin of the child marriage of their daughters, their mothers cannot think of educating them or of otherwise making their dry life a cheerful one. The man who marries a young girl, does not do so out of any altruistic motives but through sheer lust. Who is to rescue these girls? A proper answer to this question will also be a solution of the woman's problem. The answer is albeit difficult, but it is only one. There is of course none to champion her cause but her husband. It is useless to expect a child-wife to be able to bring round the man who has married her. The difficult work must, therefore, for the present at least be left to man. If I could, I would take a census of child wives and will find the friends as well as through moral and polite exhortations I will attempt to bring home to them the enormity of their crime in linking their fortunes with child wives and will warn them that there is

no expiation for that sin unless and until they have by education made their wives fit, not only to bear children but also to bring them up properly and unless in the meantime they live a life of absolute celibacy.

#### QUIET AND UNOBTRUSIVE WORK NEEDED

Thus, there are many fruitful fields of activity before the members of the Bhagini Samaj for devoting their energies to. The field for work is so vast that if resolute application is brought to bear thereon, the wider movements for reform may for the present be left to themselves and great service can be done to the cause of Home Rule without so much as even a verbal reference to it. When printing presses were non-existent and scope for speech-making very limited, when one could hardly travel twenty-four miles in the course of a day instead of a thousand miles as now, we had only one agency for propagating our ideals and that was our "Acts"; and Acts had immense potency. We are now rushing to and from with the velocity of air, delivering speeches, writing newspaper articles and yet we fall short of our accomplishments and the cry of despair fills the air. I, for one, am of opinion that as in old days our Acts will have a more powerful influence on the public than any number of speeches and writing. It is my earnest prayer to your Association that its members should give prominence to quiet and unobtrusive work in whatever it does.

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## THE AHMEDABAD MILL-HANDS

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When the mill-hands at Ahmedabad went on strike, Mr. Gandhi was requisitioned to settle the dispute between the mill-owners and the workmen. Mr. Gandhi was guiding the labourers to a successful settlement of their wages when some of them betrayed a sense of weakness and despair, and demoralisation was apprehended. At a critical stage in the crisis, Mr. Gandhi and Miss Anasuyabai took the vow of fast. This extreme action on the part of Mr. Gandhi was disquieting to friends and provoked some bitter comments from the unfriendly. In the following statement issued from Nadiad under date March 27, 1918, Mr. Gandhi explains the circumstances which necessitated this action :

Perhaps I owe an explanation to the public with regard to my recent fast. Some friends consider the action to have been silly, others cowardly and some others still worse. In my opinion I would have been untrue to my Maker and to the cause I was espousing if I had acted otherwise.

When over a month ago I reached Bombay, I was told that Ahmedabad mill-hands had threatened a strike and violence if the bonus that was given to them during the plague was withdrawn. I was asked to intervene and I consented.

Owing to the plague, the men were getting as much as 70 per cent. bonus since August last. An attempt to recall that bonus had resulted in grave dissatisfaction among the labourers. When it was almost too late, the mill-owners offered, in the place of the plague bonus and for the sake of the high prices, a rise of 20 per cent. The labourers were unsatisfied. The matter was referred to arbitration, Mr. Chatfield, the Collector, being the Umpire. The men in some mills however struck work.

The owners thinking that they had done so without just cause withdrew from the arbitration and declared a general lock-out to be continued till the labourers were exhausted into accepting the 20 per cent. increase they had offered. Messrs. Shankerlal Banker, V. J. Patel and I the arbitrators appointed on behalf of the labourers, thought that they were to be demoralised if we did not act promptly and decisively. We, therefore, investigated the question of increase, we sought the mill-owners' assistance. They would not give it. Their one purpose was to organise themselves into a combination that could fight a similar combination of their employees. One-sided technically though our investigation was, we endeavoured to examine the mill-owners' side and came to the conclusion that 35 per cent. increase was fair. Before announcing the figure to the mill-hands we informed the employers of the result of our inquiry and told them that we would correct ourselves if they could show any error. The latter would not co-operate. They sent a reply saying as much, but they pointed out in it that the rate of increase granted by the Government as also the employers in Bombay was much less than the one contemplated by us. I felt that the addendum was beside the point, and at a huge meeting announced 35 per cent. for the mill-hands' acceptance. Be it noted that the plague bonus amounted to 70 per cent. of their wages and they had declared their intention of accepting not less than 50 per cent. as high prices increase. They were now called upon to accept the mean, finding the mean was quite an accident between the mill-owners' 20 per cent. and their own 50 per cent. After some grumbling, the meeting accepted the 35 per cent. increase, it always being understood that they would recognise at

the same time the principle of arbitration whenever the mill-owners did so. From that time forward, *i.e.*, day after day thousands of people gathered together under the shade of a tree outside the city walls, people walking long distances in many cases and solemnly repeated their determination in the name of God not to accept anything less than 35 per cent. No pecuniary assistance was given them. It is easy enough to understand that many must suffer from the pangs of starvation and that they could not, while they were without employment, get any credit. We, who were helping them, came, on the other hand, to the conclusion that we would only spoil them if we collected public funds and utilised them for feeding them unless the able bodied amongst them were ready to perform bread-labour. It was a difficult task to persuade men who had worked at machines to shoulder baskets of sand or bricks. They came, but they did so grudgingly. The mill-owners hardened their hearts. They were equally determined not to go beyond 20 per cent. and they appointed emissaries to persuade the men to give in. Even during the early part of the lock-out, whilst we had declined to help those who would not work, we had assured them that we would feed and clothe ourselves after feeding and clothing them. Twenty-two days had passed by; hunger and the mill-owners' emissaries were producing their effect and Satan was whispering to the men that there was no such thing as God on earth who would help them and that vows were dodges resorted to by weaklings. One morning, instead of an eager and enthusiastic crowd of 5 to 10 thousand men with determination written on their faces, I met a body of about 2,000 men with despair written on their faces. We had

just heard that mill-hands living in a particular chawl had declined to attend the meeting, were preparing to go to work and accept 20 per cent. increase and were taunting us (I think very properly) that it was very well for us who had motors at our disposal and plenty of food, to attend their meetings and advise staunchness even unto death. What was I to do? I held the cause to be just. I believe in God as I believe that I am writing this letter. I believe in the necessity of the performance of "one's promises" at all costs. I knew that the men before us were God-fearing men, but that the long drawn out lock-out or strike was putting an undue strain upon them. I had the knowledge before me that during my extensive travels in India, hundreds of people were found who as readily broke their promises as they made them. I knew, too, that the best of us have but a vague and indistinct belief in soul force and in God. I felt that it was a sacred moment for me, my faith was on the anvil, and I had no hesitation in rising and declaring to the men that a breach of their vow so solemnly taken was unendurable by me and that I would not take any food until they had the 35 per cent. increase given or until they had fallen. A meeting that was up to now unlike the former meetings totally unresponsive, worked up as if by magic. Tears trickled down the cheeks of every one of them and man after man rose up saying that they would never go to the mills unless they got the increase and that they would go about the city and steel the hearts of those who had not attended the meeting. It was a privilege to witness the demonstration of the efficacy of truth and love. Every one immediately realised that the protecting power of God was

as much with us to-day as it used to be in the days of yore. I am not sorry for the vow, but with the belief that I have, I would have been unworthy of the truth undertaken by me if I had done anything less. Before I took the vow, I knew that there were serious defects about it. For me to take such a vow in order to affect in any shape or form the decision of the mill-owners would be a cowardly injustice done to them, and that I would so prove myself unfit for the friendship which I had the privilege of enjoying with some of them. I knew that I ran the risk of being misunderstood. I could not prevent my fast from affecting my decision. Their knowledge moreover put a responsibility on me which I was ill able to bear. From now I disabled myself from gaining concessions for the men which ordinarily in a struggle such as this I would be entirely justified in securing. I knew, too, that I would have to be satisfied with the minimum I could get from the mill-owners and with a fulfilment of the letter of the men's vow rather than its spirit and so hath it happened. I put the defects of my vow in one scale and the merits of it in the other. There are hardly any acts of human beings which are free from all taint. Mine, I know, was exceptionally tainted, but rather the ignominy of having unworthily compromised by my vow, the position and independence of the mill-owners than that it should be said by posterity that 10,000 men had suddenly broken a vow which they had for over twenty days solemnly taken and repeated in the name of God. I am fully convinced that no body of men can make themselves into a nation or perform great tasks unless they become as true as steel and unless their promises come to be regarded by the world like the law of the Medes and Persians,

inflexible and unbreakable, and whatever may be the verdict of friends, so far as I can think at present, on given occasions, I should not hesitate in future to repeat the humble performance which I have taken the liberty of describing in this communication.

I cannot conclude this letter without mentioning two names of whom India has every reason to be proud. The mill-owners were represented by Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai who is a gentleman in every sense of the term. He is a man of great culture and equally great abilities. He adds to these qualities a resolute will. The mill-hands were represented by his sister Anusuyabai. She possesses a heart of gold. She is full of pity for the poor. The mill-hands adore her. Her word is law with them. I have not known a struggle fought with so little bitterness and such courtesy on either side. This happy result is principally due to the connection with it of Mr. Ambalal Sarabhai and Anusuyabai.

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## LETTER TO LORD CHELMSFORD

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Mr. Gandhi addressed the following letter to H. E. the Viceroy, Lord Chelmsford, soon after the Delhi War Conference :

Sir,—As you are aware, after careful consideration, I felt constrained to convey to Your Excellency that I could not attend the Conference for reasons stated in the letter of the 26th instant (April), but after the interview you were good enough to grant me, I persuaded myself to join it, if for no other cause than certainly out of my great regard for yourself. One of my reasons for abstention and perhaps the strongest was that Lok. Tilak, Mrs. Besant and the Ali Brothers, whom I regard as among the most powerful leaders of public opinion, were not invited to the Conference. I still feel that it was a grave blunder not to have asked them and I respectfully suggest that that blunder might be possibly repaired if these leaders were invited to assist the Government by giving it the benefit of their advice at the Provincial Conferences which, I understand, are to follow. I venture to submit that no Government can afford to disregard the leaders, who represent the large masses of the people as these do, even though they may hold views fundamentally different. At the same time it gives me pleasure to be able to say that the views of all parties were permitted to be freely expressed at the Committees of the Conference. For my part, I purposely refrained from stating my views at the Committee at which I had the honour of serving, or at the Conference itself. I felt that I could best serve the objects of

the Conference by simply tendering my support to the resolutions submitted to it and this I have done without any reservation. I hope to translate the spoken word into action as early as the Government can see its way to accept my offer which I am submitting simultaneously herewith in a separate letter.

I recognise that in the hour of its danger we must give, as we have decided to give, ungrudging and unequivocal support to the Empire of which we aspire in the near future to be partners in the same sense as the Dominions Overseas. But it is the simple truth that our response is due to the expectation that our goal will be reached all the more speedily. On that account, even as performance of duty automatically confers a corresponding right, people are entitled to believe that the imminent reforms alluded to in your speech will embody the main general principles of the Congress-League Scheme, and I am sure that it is this faith which has enabled many members of the Conference to tender to the Government their full hearted co-operation. If I could make my countrymen retrace their steps, I would make them withdraw all the Congress resolutions and not whisper "Home Rule" or "Responsible Government" during the pendency of the War. I would make India offer all her able-bodied sons as a sacrifice to the Empire at its critical moment and I know that India, by this very act, would become the most favoured partner in the Empire and racial distinctions would become a thing of the past. But practically the whole of educated India has decided to take a less effective course, and it is no longer possible to say that educated India does not exercise any influence on the masses. I have been coming into most intimate touch with the raiyats ever since my



return from South Africa to India, and I wish to assure you that the desire for Home Rule has widely penetrated them. I was present at the sessions of the last Congress and I was a party to the resolution that full Responsible Government should be granted to British India within a period to be fixed definitely by a Parliamentary Statute. I admit that it is a bold step to take, but I feel sure that nothing less than a definite vision of Home Rule to be realised in the shortest possible time will satisfy the Indian people. I know that there are many in India who consider no sacrifice is too great in order to achieve the end, and they are wakeful enough to realise that they must be equally prepared to sacrifice themselves for the Empire in which they hope and desire to reach their final status. It follows then that we can but accelerate our journey to the goal by silently and simply devoting ourselves heart and soul to the work of delivering the Empire from the threatening danger. It will be a national suicide not to recognise this elementary truth. We must perceive that if we serve to save the Empire, we have in that very act secured Home Rule.

Whilst, therefore, it is clear to me that we should give to the Empire every available man for its defence, I fear that I cannot say the same thing about the financial assistance. My intimate intercourse with the raiyats convinces me that India has already donated to the Imperial Exchequer beyond her capacity. I know that, in making this statement, I am voicing the opinion of the majority of my countrymen.

The Conference means for me, and I believe for many of us, a definite step in the consecration of our

lives to the common cause, but ours is a peculiar position. We are to-day outside the partnership. Ours is a consecration based on hope of better future. I should be untrue to you and to my country if I did not clearly and unequivocally tell you what that hope is. I do not bargain for its fulfilment, but you should know that disappointment of hope means disillusion. There is one thing I may not omit. You have appealed to us to sink domestic differences. If appeal involves the toleration of tyranny and wrong-doings on the part of officials, I am powerless to respond. I shall resist organised tyranny to the uttermost. The appeal must be to the officials that they do not ill-treat a single soul and that they consult and respect popular opinion as never before. In Champaran by resisting an age-long tyranny, I have shown the ultimate sovereignty of British justice. In Kaira, a population that was cursing the Government now feels that it, and not the Government, is the power when it is prepared to suffer for the truth it represents. It is, therefore, losing its bitterness and is saying to itself that the Government must be a Government for people, for it tolerates orderly and respectful disobedience where injustice is felt. Thus Champaran and Kaira affairs are my direct, definite and special contribution to the War. Ask me to suspend my activities in that direction and you ask me to suspend my life. If I could popularise the use of soul force which is but another name for love force in place of brute force, I know that I could present you with an India that could defy the whole world to its worst. In season and out of season, therefore, I shall discipline myself to express in my life this eternal law of suffering and present it for acceptance to those who care, and if I

take part in any other activity, the motive is to show the matchless superiority of that law.

Lastly, I would like you to ask His Majesty's Ministers to give definite assurance about Muhammadan States. I am sure you know that every Muhammadan is deeply interested in them. As a Hindu, I cannot be indifferent to their cause. Their sorrows must be our sorrows. In the most scrupulous regard for the rights of those States and for the Muslim sentiment as to the places of worship, and your just and timely treatment of Indian claim to Home Rule, lies the safety of the Empire. I write this, because I love the English Nation, and I wish to evoke in every Indian the loyalty of Englishmen.

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## RECRUITING FOR THE WAR

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The following is the translation of Mr. Gandhi's address delivered at a meeting in the district of Kaira in July 1918 :

Sisters and Brothers of Kaira,—You have just come successful out of a glorious *Satyagraha* campaign. You have, during it, given such evidence of fearlessness, tact and other virtues that I venture to advise and urge you to undertake a still greater campaign.

You have successfully demonstrated how you can resist Government with civility, and how you can retain your own respect without hurting theirs. I now place before you an opportunity of proving that you bear no hostility to Government in spite of your strenuous fight with them.

You are all Home Rulers, some of you are members of Home Rule Leagues. One meaning of Home rule is that we should become partners of the Empire. To-day we are a subject people. We do not enjoy all the rights of Englishmen. We are not to-day partners of the Empire as are Canada, South Africa and Australia. We are a dependency. We want the rights of Englishmen and we aspire to as much partners of the Empire as the Dominions overseas. We wish for the time when we may aspire to the Viceregal office. To bring such a state of things, we should have the ability to defend ourselves, that is the ability to bear arms and to use them. As long as we have to look to Englishmen for our defence, as long as we are not free from the military, so long we cannot be regarded as equal partners with Englishmen. It, therefore, behoves us to learn the use of arms and to acquire the ability to defend ourselves. If we want to learn the use of arms with

the greatest possible despatch, it is our duty to enlist ourselves in the Army.

There can be no friendship between the brave and the effeminate. We are regarded as a cowardly people. If we want to become free from that reproach, we should learn the use of arms.

Partnership in the Empire is our definite goal. We should suffer to the utmost of our ability and even lay down our lives to defend the Empire. If the Empire perishes, with it perish our cherished aspirations.

The easiest and the straightest way, therefore, to win *Swarajya* is to participate in the defence of the Empire. It is not within our power to give much money. Moreover, it is not money that will win the war. Only an inexhaustible army can do it. That army India can supply. If the Empire wins mainly with the help of our army, it is obvious that we would secure the rights we want.

Some will say that if we do not secure these rights just now, we would be cheated of them afterwards. The power acquired in defending the Empire will be the power that can secure those rights. Rights won by making an opportunity of the Empire's weakness are likely to be lost when the Empire gains its strength. We cannot be partners of the Empire by embarrassing it. Embarrassment in its hour of crisis will not avail to secure the rights we need ; we must win by serving it. To distrust the statesmen of the Empire is to distrust our own strength, it is a sign of our own weakness. We should not depend for our rights on the goodness or the weakness of the statesmen. We should depend on our fitness, our strength. The Native States are helping the Empire and they are getting their reward. The

rich are rendering full financial assistance to Government and they are likewise getting their reward. The assistance in either case is rendered conditionally. The sepoys are rendering their services for their salt and for their livelihood. They get their livelihood, and *pzeris* and honours in addition. All these classes are a part of us, but they cannot be regarded as Home Rulers, their goal is not Home Rule. The help they render is not consecrated to the country.

If we seek to win *Swarajya* in a spirit of hostility, it is possible for the Imperial statesmen to use these three forces against us and defeat us. If we want *Swarajya*, it is our duty to help the Empire and we shall undoubtedly get the reward of their help. If our motive is honest, Government will behave honestly with us. Assuming for a moment that they will not do so, our honesty should make us confident of our success. It is not a mark of greatness to return goodness for goodness only. Greatness lies in returning good for evil.

Government do not give us commissions in the Army; they do not repeal the Arms Act; they do not open schools for military training. How can we then cooperate with them? These are valid objections. In not granting reforms in these matters, Government are making a serious blunder. The English nation has performed several acts of virtue. For these, God's grace be with it. But the heinous sin perpetrated by the English administrators in the name of that nation will undo the effect of these acts of virtue if they do not take care betimes. If the worst happens to India, which may God forbid, and she passes into the hands of some other nation, India's piteous cry will make England hang her head in shame.

before the world, and curses will descend upon her for having emasculated a nation of thirty crores. I believe the statesmen of England have realised this and they have taken the warning; but they are unable to alter all of a sudden the situation created by themselves. Every Englishman upon entering India is trained to despise us, to regard himself as our superior and to maintain a spirit of isolation from us. They imbibe these characteristics from their Indian atmosphere. The finer spirits try to get themselves rid of this atmosphere and endeavour to do likewise with the rank and file, but their effort does not bear immediate fruit. If there were no crisis for the Empire, we should be fighting against this domineering spirit. But to sit still at this crisis, waiting for commissions, etc., is like cutting the nose to spite the face. It may happen perchance that we may idle away our time waiting for commissions till the opportunity to help the Empire may be gone.

Even if Government desire to obstruct us in enlisting in the army and rendering other help by refusing us commissions or by delay in giving them, it is my firm belief that it is incumbent upon us to insist upon joining the army.

Government at present want five lakhs of men for the army. This number they are sure to raise some way or the other. If we supply this number, we would cover ourselves with glory, we would be rendering true service and the reports that we often hear of improper recruitment will be a thing of the past. It is no small thing to have the whole work of recruiting in our hands. If the Government have no trust in us, if their intentions are not pure, they would not raise recruits through our agency.

The foregoing argument will show that by enlisting in the army we help the Empire, we qualify ourselves for *Swarajya*, we learn to defend India and to a certain extent regain our lost manhood. I admit it is because of my faith in the English nation that I can advise as I am doing. I believe that, though this nation has done India much harm, to retain connection with that nation is to our advantage. Their virtues seem to me to outweigh their vices. It is miserable to remain in subjection to that nation. The Englishmen have the great vice of depriving a subject nation of its self-respect, but they have also the virtue of treating their equals with due respect and of loyalty towards them. We have seen that they have many times helped those groaning under the tyranny of others. In partnership with them we have to give and receive a great many things to and from each other and our connection with them based on that relationship is likely to benefit the world. If such was not my faith and if I thought it desirable to become absolutely independent of that nation, I would not only not advise co-operation but would certainly advise people to rebel and by paying the penalty of the rebellion, awaken the people. We are not in a position to-day to stand on our own legs unaided and alone. I believe that our good lies in becoming and remaining equal partners of the Empire, and I have seen it throughout India that all Home Rulers are of the same belief.

I expect from Kaira and Gujarat not 500 or 700 recruits but thousands. If Gujarat wants to wipe herself free of the reproach of "effeminate Gujarat", she should be prepared to contribute thousands of sepoys. These must include the educated classes, the Pattidars, the Dharalas, Vaghris and all, and I hope they will fight side by side as comrades. Unless the educated classes or



the elite of the community take the lead, it is idle to expect the other classes to come forward. I believe that those from the educated classes are above the prescribed age, but are able-bodied, may enlist themselves. Their services will be utilised, if not for actual fighting, for many other purposes accessory thereto, and for treating and nursing the sepoys. I hope also that those who have grown-up sons will not hesitate to send them as recruits. To sacrifice sons in the War ought to be a cause not of pain but of pleasure to brave men. Sacrifice of sons at the crisis will be sacrifice for *Swarajya*.

To you, my sisters, I request that you will not be startled by this appeal but will accord it a hearty welcome. It contains the key to your protection and your honour.

There are 600 villages in the Kaira district. Every village has on an average a population of over 1,000. If every village gave at least twenty men, the Kaira district would be able to raise an army of 12,000 men. The population of the whole district is seven lakhs and this number will then work out at 17 per cent.—a rate which is lower than the death-rate. If we are not prepared to make even this sacrifice for the Empire and *Swarajya*, it is no wonder if we are regarded as unworthy of it. If every village gives at least twenty men, they will return from the War and be the living bulwarks of their village. If they fall on the battle-field, they will immortalise themselves, their villages and their country, and twenty fresh men will follow suit and offer themselves for national defence.

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## THE MONTAGU-CHELMSFORD SCHEME

On the publication of the "Report on Constitutional Reforms" by the Rt. Hon. Mr. E. S. Montagu and H. E. Lord Chelmsford, Mr. Gandhi wrote the following letter, dated July 18, 1918, to the Hon. (now the Rt. Hon.) Mr. V. S. Srinivasa Sastri, who had invited him to give an expression of his views on the subject for publication in the *Servant of India*. Mr. Gandhi wrote:

After all, our standard of measurement must be the Congress-League Scheme. Crude though it is, I think that we should, with all the vehemence and skill that we can command, press for the incorporation into it of the essentials of our own.

I would, therefore, for instance ask for the rejection of the doctrine of compartments. I very much fear that the dual system in the Provinces will be fatal to the success of the experiment and as it may be only the success of the experiment that can take us to the next and, I hope, the final stage, we cannot be too insistent that the idea of reservation should be dropped. One cannot help noticing an unfortunate suspicion of our intentions regarding the purely British as distinguished from the purely Indian interests. Hence, there is to be seen in the scheme elaborate reservations on behalf of these interests. I think that, more than anything else, it is necessary to have an honest, frank and straightforward understanding about these interests, and for me personally this is of much greater importance than any legislative feat that British talent may be capable of performing. I would certainly in as courteous terms as possible but equally emphatic say that these interests will be held subservient to those of India as a whole and that therefore they are certainly in jeopardy in so far as they may be inconsistent with the general advance of India. Thus, if I had my

way, I would cut down the Military expenditure. I would protect local industries by heavily taxing goods that compete against products of our industries, and I would reduce to a minimum the British element in our services, retaining only those that may be needed for our instruction and guidance. I do not think that they had or have any claim upon our attention, save by right of conquest. That claim must clearly go by the board as soon as we have awakened to a consciousness of our national existence and possess the strength to vindicate our right to the restoration of what we have lost. To their credit let it be said that they do not themselves advance any claim by right of conquest. One can readily join in the tribute of praise bestowed upon the Indian Civil Service for their proficiency, devotion to duty, and great organising ability. So far as material reward is concerned, that Service has been more than handsomely paid and our gratitude otherwise can be best expressed by assimilating their virtues ourselves.

No scheme of reform can possibly benefit India that does not recognise that the present administration is top-heavy and ruinously expensive, and for me even law, order and good government would be too dearly purchased if the price to be paid for it is to be the grinding poverty of the masses. The watchword of our reform councils will have to be, not the increase of taxation for the growing needs of a growing country, but a decrease of financial burdens that are sapping the foundation itself of organic growth. If this fundamental fact is recognised, there need be no suspicion of our motives, and I think I am perfectly safe in asserting that in every other respect British interests will be as secure in Indian hands as they are in their own.

## THE ROWLATT BILLS & SATYAGRAHA

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But Mr. Gandhi's enthusiasm for constitutional reforms was shortlived. In fact, he was to be entirely engrossed in a movement which was soon to become countrywide. The Government of India persisted in passing a piece of legislation known as the Rowlatt Laws which were designed to curb still further what little liberty was yet possessed by the people of this country. The legislation was presumed to be based on the Report of the Rowlatt Committee which announced the discovery of plots for the subversion of Government. Friends of Government, solicitous of the peaceful and well-ordered condition of society, warned it of the danger of passing such Acts especially at a time when Responsible Government was contemplated. The Bill was stoutly opposed by the public and the press. It was denounced by every political organisation worth the name. It was severely and even vehemently attacked in the Imperial Council. Irrespective of parties, the whole country stood solid against a measure of such iniquity. The Hon. Mr. (now the Rt. Hon.) Sastri and Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and in fact every one of the non-official members condemned the Bill as outrageous and forebode grave consequences if it should be passed. But Government was obstinate and the Bill was passed in the teeth of all opposition. Mr. Gandhi, who travelled all over the country and wrote and spoke with amazing energy, was not to be easily silenced. Every other form of constitutional agitation having failed, he resorted as usual to his patent *Satyagraha*. In this connection he published several contributions in the press and spoke on many occasions. An attempt is made in the following pages to record them in the order of dates.

## THE PLEDGE

On February 28, 1919, Mr. Gandhi published a momentous pledge which he asked his countrymen to sign and observe as a covenant binding on them. The pledge ran as follows :—

*Being conscientiously of opinion that the Bill known as the Indian Criminal Law (Amendment) Bill No. I of 1919, and the Criminal Law (Emergency Powers) Bill No. II of 1919, are unjust, subversive of the principle of liberty and justice and destructive of the elementary rights of individuals on which the safety of the community as a whole and the State itself is based, we solemnly affirm that in the event of these Bills becoming law and until they are withdrawn, we shall refuse civilly to obey these laws and such other laws as a Committee to be hereafter appointed may think fit and further affirm, that in this struggle we will faithfully follow truth and refrain from violence to life, person or property.*

## MANIFESTO TO THE PRESS

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[In commending the *Satyagraha* pledge, Mr. Gandhi wrote to the Press under date February 28, 1919:—

The step taken is probably the most momentous in the history of India. I give my assurance that it has not been hastily taken. Personally I have passed many sleepless nights over it. I have endeavoured duly to appreciate Government's position, but I have been unable to find any justification for the extraordinary Bills. I have read the Rowlatt Committee's report. I have gone through the narrative with admiration. Its reading has driven me to conclusions just the opposite of the Committee's. I should conclude from the report that secret violence is confined to isolated and very small parts of India, and to a microscopic body of people. The existence of such men is truly a danger to society. But the passing of the Bills, designed to affect the whole of India and its people and arming the Government with powers out of all proportion to the situation sought to be dealt with, is a greater danger. The Committee ignore the historical fact that the millions in India are by nature the gentlest on earth.

Now look at the setting of the Bills. Their introduction is accompanied by certain assurances given by the Viceroy regarding the Civil Service and the British commercial interests. Many of us are filled with the greatest misgivings about the Viceregal utterance. I frankly confess I do not understand its full scope and intention. If it means that the Civil Service, and the British commercial interests, are to be held superior to those of India and its political and commercial requirements, no Indian can accept the doctrine. It can but end in a fratricidal struggle within the Empire. Reforms may or may not

come. The need of the moment is a proper and just understanding upon this vital issue. No tinkering with it will produce real satisfaction. Let the great Civil Service Corporation understand that it can remain in India only as its trustee and servant, not in name, but in deed, and let the British commercial houses understand that they can remain in India only to supplement her requirements and not to destroy indigenous art, trade and manufacture, and you have two measures to replace the Rowlatt Bills.

It will be now easy to see why I consider the Bills to be an unmistakable symptom of a deep-seated disease in the governing body. It needs, therefore, to be drastically treated. Subterranean violence will be the remedy applied by impetuous, hot-headed youths who will have grown impatient of the spirit underlying the Bills and the circumstances attending their introduction. The Bills must intensify the hatred and ill-will against the State, of which the deeds of violence are undoubtedly an evidence. The Indian covenanters, by their determination to undergo every form of suffering, make an irresistible appeal to the Government towards which they bear no ill-will and provide to the believers in the efficacy of violence as a means of securing redress of grievances with an infallible remedy and withal a remedy that blesses those that use it and also those against whom it is used. If the covenanters know the use of this remedy, I fear no ill from it, I have no business to doubt their ability. They must ascertain whether the disease is sufficiently great to justify the strong remedy and whether all milder ones have been tried. They have convinced themselves that the disease is serious enough and that milder measures have utterly failed. The rest lies in the lap of the gods.

## SPEECH AT ALLAHABAD

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Mr. Gandhi in his speech at Allahabad, on the 11th March, explained the *Satyagraha* pledge as follows :—

It behoves every one who wishes to take the *Satyagraha* pledge to seriously consider all its factors before taking it. It is necessary to understand the principles of *Satyagraha*, to understand the main features of the Bills known as the Rowlatt Bills, and to be satisfied that they are so objectionable as to warrant the very powerful remedy of *Satyagraha* being applied and, finally, to be convinced of one's ability to undergo every form of bodily suffering so that the soul may be set free and be under no fear from any human being or institution. Once in it, there is no looking back.

Therefore there is no conception of defeat in *Satyagraha*. A *Satyagrahi* fights even unto death. It is thus not an easy thing for everybody to enter upon it. It therefore behoves a *Satyagrahi* to be tolerant of those who do not join him. In reading reports of *Satyagraha* meetings, I often notice that ridicule is poured upon those who do not join our movement. This is entirely against the spirit of the pledge. In *Satyagraha* we expect to win over our opponents by self-suffering, i.e., by love. The process whereby we hope to reach our goal is by so conducting ourselves as gradually and in an unperceived manner to disarm all opposition. Opponents as a rule expect irritation, even violence from one another when both parties are equally matched. But when *Satyagraha* comes into play, the expectation is transformed into agreeable surprise in the mind of



the party towards whom *Satyagraha* is addressed till at last he relents and recalls the act which necessitated *Satyagraha*. I venture to promise that if we act up in our pledge day after day, the atmosphere around us will be purified and those who differ from us from honest motives, as I verily believe they do, will perceive that their alarm was unjustified. The violationists wherever they may be, will realise that they have in *Satyagraha* a far more potent instrument for achieving reform than violence whether secret or open and that it gives them enough work for their inexhaustible energy. And the Government will have no case left in defence of their measures if, as a result of our activity, the cult of violence is notably on the wane if it has not entirely died out. I hope therefore that at *Satyagraha* meetings we shall have no cries of shame, and no language betraying irritation or impatience either against the Government or our countrymen who differ from us, and some of whom have for years been devoting themselves to the country's cause according to the best of their ability.

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## SPEECH AT BOMBAY

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At the Bombay meeting against the Rowlatt Bills on 14th March, Mr. Gandhi's speech which was in Gujarati, was read out by his Secretary. The speech ran as follows :—

You will be glad to know that Sanyasi Shrad-dhanandji is gracing the audience to-day by his presence. He is better known to us as Mahatma Munshiramji, the Governor of Gurukul. His joining our army is a source of strength to us. Many of you have perhaps been keenly following the proceedings of the Viceregal Council. Bill No. 2 is being steamrolled by means of the official majority of the Government and in the teeth of the unanimous opposition from the non-official members. I deem it to be an insult to the latter and through them to the whole of India. *Satyagraha* has become necessary as much to ensure respect for duly expressed public opinion as to have the mischievous Bills withdrawn. Grave responsibility rests upon the shoulders of the *Satyagrahis* though, as I have so often said, there is no such thing as defeat in *Satyagraha* : it does not mean that victory can be achieved without *Satyagrahis* to fight for it, i.e., to suffer for it. The use of this matchless force is comparatively a novelty. It is not the same thing as passive resistance which has been conceived to be a weapon that can be wielded most effectively only by the strongest minded, and you may depend upon it that six hundred men and women who in this Presidency have signed the pledge are more than enough for our purpose if they have strong wills and invincible faith in their

mission, and that is in the power of truth to conquer untruth which *Satyagrahis* believe the Bills represent. I use the word 'untruth' in its widest sense. We may expect often to be told—as we have been told already by Sir William Vincent—that the Government will not yield to any threat of passive resistance. *Satyagraha* is not a threat, it is a fact; and even such a mighty Government as the Government of India will have to yield if we are true to our pledge. For the pledge is not a small thing. It means a change of heart. It is an attempt to introduce the religious spirit into politics. We may no longer believe in the doctrine of 'tit for tat'; we may not meet hatred by hatred, violence by violence, evil by evil; but we have to make a continuous and persistent effort to return good for evil. It is of no consequence that I give utterance to these sentiments. Every *Satyagrahi* has to live up to them. It is a difficult task but with the help of God, nothing is impossible. (*Loud cheers.*)

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## SPEECH AT MADRAS

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At the meeting held at the Madras Beach on the 18th March, Mr. Gandhi's speech was read out by Mr. Desai :—

You have no doubt attended many meetings, but those that you have been attending of late are different from the others, in that at the meetings to which I have referred some immediate tangible action, some immediate definite sacrifice has been demanded of you for the purpose of averting a serious calamity that has overtaken us in the shape of what are known as the Rowlatt Bills. One of them Bill No. I has undergone material alterations and its further consideration has been postponed. In spite, however, of the alteration, it is mischievous enough to demand opposition. The Second Bill has probably at this very moment been finally passed by that Council, for in reality you can hardly call the Bill as having been passed by that august body when all its non-official members unanimously and in strong language opposed it. The Bills require to be resisted, not only because they are in themselves bad but also because Government who are responsible for their introduction have seen fit practically to ignore public opinion and some of its members have made it a boast that they can so ignore that opinion. So far it is common cause between the different schools of thought in the country. I have, however, after much prayerful consideration and after very careful examination of the Government's standpoint, pledged myself to offer *Satyagraha* against the Bills and invited all men and women who think and feel with me to do likewise.

Some of our countrymen, including those who are among the best of the leaders, have uttered a note of warning and even gone so far as to say that this *Satyagraha* movement is against the best interests of the country. I have naturally the highest regard for them and their opinion. I have worked under some of them. I was a babe when Sir Dinshaw Wacha and Babu Surendranath Bannerji were among the accepted leaders of public opinion in India. Mr. Sastriar is a politician who has dedicated his all to the country's cause. His sincerity, his probity are all his own. He will yield to no one in the love of the country. There is a sacred and indissoluble tie binding me to him. My upbringing draws me to the signatories of the two Manifestoes. It is not, therefore, without the greatest grief and much searching of heart that I have to place myself in opposition to their wishes. But there are times when you have to obey a call which is the highest of all, i.e., the voice of conscience even though such obedience may cost many a bitter tear, nay even more, separation from friends, from family, from the State to which you may belong, from all that you have held as dear as life itself. For, this obedience is the law of our being. I have one further and other defence to offer for my conduct. My regard for the signatories to the Manifesto\* remains undiminished and my faith in the efficiency of *Satyagraha* is so great that I feel that if those who have taken the pledge will be true to it, we shall be able to show to them that they will find, when we have come to the end of this struggle, that there was no cause for alarm or misgivings. There is, I know, resentment felt even by some *Satyagrahis*.

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\* Opposing the *Satyagraha* Movement.

over the Manifestoes. I would warn *Satyagrahis* that such resentment is against the spirit of *Satyagraha*. I would personally welcome an honest expression of difference of opinion from any quarter and more so from friends because it puts us on our guard. There is too much recrimination, innuendo and insinuation in our public life, and if the *Satyagraha* movement purges it of this grave defect, as it ought to, it will be a very desirable by-product. I wish further to suggest to *Satyagrahis* that any resentment of the two Manifestoes would be but a sign of weakness on our part. Every movement, and *Satyagraha* most of all, must depend upon its own inherent strength but not upon the weakness or silence of its critics.

Let us therefore see wherein lies the strength of *Satyagraha*. As the name implies, it is in an insistence on truth which, dynamically expressed, means love; and by the law of love we are required not to return hatred for hatred, violence for violence but to return good for evil. As Shrimati Sarojini Devi told you yesterday, the strength lies in a definite recognition of the true religious spirit and action corresponding to it and when once you introduce the religious element in politics, you revolutionise the whole of your political outlook. You achieve reform then, not by imposing suffering on those who resist it but by taking the suffering upon yourselves and so in this movement we hope, by the intensity of our sufferings, to affect and alter the Government's resolution not to withdraw these objectionable Bills. It has however been suggested that the Government will leave the handful of *Satyagrahis* severely alone and not make martyrs of them. But there is here, in my humble opinion, bad logic and an unwarranted assumption

of fact. If *Satyagrahis* are left alone, they have won a complete victory because they will have succeeded in disregarding the Rowlatt Bills and even other laws of the country and in having thus shown that a civil disobedience of a Government is held perfectly harmless. I regard the statement as an unwarranted assumption of fact, because it contemplates the restriction of the movement only to a handful of men and women. My experience of *Satyagraha* leads me to believe that it is such a potent force that once set in motion, it ever spreads till at last it becomes a dominant factor in the community in which it is brought into play, and if it so spreads, no Government can neglect it. Either it must yield to it or imprison the workers in the movement. But I have no desire to argue. As the English proverb says : 'The proof of the pudding lies in the eating.' The movement, for better or for worse, has been launched. We shall be judged not by our words but solely by our deeds. It is therefore not enough that we sign the pledge. Our signing it is but an earnest of our determination to act up to it, and if all who sign the pledge act according to it, I make bold to promise that we shall bring about the withdrawal of the two Bills, and neither the Government nor our critics will have a word to say against us. The cause is great, the remedy is equally great; let us prove worthy of them both.

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## APPEAL TO LORD CHELMSFORD

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A public meeting of the citizens of Madras was held on March 20, 1919, at the Beach opposite the Presidency College, Madras, to appeal to the Viceroy to withhold his assent to the Rowlatt Act and to convey to Mr. Gandhi their profound and respectful thanks for the trouble he had taken to visit Madras in order to strengthen the *Satyagraha* movement. Mr. Gandhi did not attend owing to ill-health. Mr. Desai read the following message from Mr. Gandhi:—

Friends,—This afternoon I propose to deal with some of the objections that have been raised against *Satyagraha*. After saying that it was a matter of regret that men like myself “should have embarked on this movement”, Sir William Vincent, in winding up the debate on Bill No. 2, said :

They could only hope that the *Satyagraha* would not materialise. Mr. Gandhi might exercise great self-restraint in action, but there would be other young hot-headed men who might be led into violence which could not but end in disaster. Yielding to this threat, however, would be tantamount to complete abolition of the authority of the Governor-General-in-Council.

If Sir William's fear as to violence is realised, it would undoubtedly be a disaster. It is for every *Satyagrahi* to guard against that danger. I entertain no such fear; because our creed requires us to eschew all violence and to resort to truth and self-suffering as the only weapons in our armoury. Indeed, the *Satyagraha* movement is, among other things, an invitation to those who believe in the efficiency of violence for redress of grievances to join our ranks and honestly to follow our methods. I have suggested elsewhere that what the Rowlatt Bills are intended to do, and what I verily believe they are bound to fail in achieving, is exactly what the *Satyagraha* movement is pre-eminently capable of achieving. By demonstrating to the party of violence the infallible power of



*Satyagraha*, and by giving them ample scope for their inexhaustible energy, we hope to wean that party from the suicidal method of violence. What can be more potent than an absolute statement, accompanied by corresponding action, presented in the clearest terms possible that violence is never necessary for the purpose of securing reforms? Sir William says that the movement has great potentialities of evil. The Hon. Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya is said to have retorted: "and also of good". I would venture to improve upon the retort by saying, "only of good". It constitutes an attempt to revolutionise politics and to restore moral force to its original station. After all, the Government do not believe in an entire avoidance of violence, *i.e.*, physical force. The message of the West which the Government of India, I presume, represent is succinctly put by President Wilson in his speech delivered to the Peace Conference at the time of introducing the League of Nations Covenant: "Armed force is in the background in this programme, but it is in the background, and if the moral force of the world will not suffice, physical force of the world shall." We hope to reverse the process and by our action show that physical force is nothing compared to the moral force and that moral force never fails. It is my firm belief that this is the fundamental difference between modern civilisation and the ancient, of which India, fallen though it is, I venture to claim, is a living representative. We, her educated children, seem to have lost faith in this—the grandest doctrine of life. If we could but restore that faith in the supremacy of Moral Force, we shall have made a priceless contribution to the British Empire, and we shall without fail obtain the reforms we desire and to which we may be entitled. . . .

It is to such a movement that every man and woman in this great country is invited, but a movement that is intended to produce far-reaching results, and which depends for success on the purity and the capacity for self-suffering of those who are engaged in it, can only be joined after a searching and prayerful self-examination. I may not too often give the warning I have given at *Satyagraha* meetings, that every one should think a thousand times before coming to it but having come to it he must remain in it, cost what it may. A friend came to me yesterday and told me that he did not know that it meant all that was explained at a gathering of a few *Satyagrahi* friends and wanted to withdraw. I told him that he could certainly do so if he had signed without understanding the full consequences of the pledge. And I would ask every one who did not understand the pledge as it has been explained at various meetings to copy this example. It is not numbers so much as quality that we want. Let me therefore note down the qualities required of a *Satyagrahi*. He must follow truth at any cost and in all circumstances. He must make a continuous effort to love his opponents. He must be prepared to go through every form of suffering, whether imposed upon him by the Government which he is civilly resisting for the time being, or only those who may differ from him. This movement is thus a process of purification and penance. Believe me that, if we go through it in the right spirit, all the fears expressed by the Government and some of our friends will be proved to be groundless, and we will not only see the Rowlatt Bills withdrawn but the country will recognise in *Satyagraha* a powerful and religious weapon for securing reforms and redress of legitimate grievances.

## THE SATYAGRAHA DAY

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Mr. Gandhi published the following, under date 23rd March, during his stay in Madras :—

I venture to suggest that the Second Sunday, after the publication of the Viceregal assent to Bill No. 2 of 1919 (i.e., 6th April), may be observed as a day of humiliation and prayer. As there must be an effective public demonstration in keeping with the character of the observance, I beg to advise as follows :

(i) A twenty-four hours' fast counting from the last meal on the preceding night should be observed by all adults unless prevented from so doing by consideration of religion or health. The fast is not to be regarded in any shape or form in the nature of a hunger-strike or as designed to put any pressure upon the Government. It is to be regarded for all *Satyagrahis* as the necessary discipline to fit them for civil disobedience contemplated in their pledge and for all others as some slight token of the intensity of their wounded feelings.

(ii) All work except such as may be necessary in the public interest should be suspended for the day. Markets and other business places should be closed. Employees who are required to work even on Sundays may only suspend work after obtaining previous leave.

I do not hesitate to recommend these two suggestions for adoption by public servants. . . . .

(iii) Public meetings should be held on that day in all parts of India, not excluding villages at which resolutions praying for the withdrawal of the two measures should be passed.

## SATYAGRAHA DAY IN MADRAS

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Under the auspices of Madras *Satyagraha* Sabha, a public meeting was held at the Triplicane Beach, on 30th March, to explain the message of Mr. Gandhi for the observance of *Satyagraha* day. Gandhiji's written speech was read out at the meeting. In the course of the speech, Mr. Gandhi observed:—

I have visited Tanjore, Trichinopoly, Madura, Tuticorin and Negapatam and taking the lowest estimate, the people addressed must have been not less than thirty thousand. Those who have a right to give us warnings, to express misgivings and who have just as great a love of the Motherland as we claim to have, have feared the danger that, however well meaning we may be, and however anxious we may be to avoid violence, the people who may join the movement under an enthusiastic impulse, may not be able to exercise sufficient self-control and break out into violence resulting in needless loss of life and, what is more, injury to the National cause. After embarking upon the movement, I began addressing meetings at Delhi. I passed then through Lucknow, Allahabad, Bombay and thence to Madras. My experience of all these meetings shows that the advent of *Satyagraha* has already altered the spirit of those who attend the *Satyagraha* meetings. . . .

A *Satyagrahi* is nothing if not instinctively law-abiding, and it is his law-abiding nature which exacts from him implicit obedience to the highest law that is the voice of conscience which over-rides all other laws. His civil disobedience even of certain laws is only seeming disobedience. Every law gives the subject an option either to obey the primary sanction or

the secondary, and I venture to suggest that the *Satyagrahi* by inviting the secondary sanction obeys the law. He does not act like the ordinary offender who not only commits a breach of the laws of the land whether good or bad but wishes to avoid the consequences of that breach. It will seem therefore that every thing that prudence may dictate has been done to avoid any untoward results. Some friends have said: "We understand your breach of the Rowlatt legislation but as a *Satyagrahi* there is nothing for you in it to break. How can you however break the other laws which you have hitherto obeyed and which may also be good!" So far as good laws are concerned, that is, laws which lay down moral principles, the *Satyagrahi* may not break them and their breach is not contemplated under the pledge. But the other laws are neither good nor bad, moral or immoral. They may be useful or may even be harmful. Those laws one obeys for the supposed good government of the country. Such laws are laws made for the purpose of revenue, or political laws creating statutory offences. Those laws enable the Government to continue its power. When, therefore, a Government goes wrong to the extent of hurting the National fibre itself, as does the Rowlatt Legislation, it becomes the right of the subject, indeed it is his duty, to withdraw his obedience to such laws to the extent it may be required in order to bend the Government to the National will.

I have been told that I am diverting the attention of the country from the one and only thing that matters, namely, the forthcoming reforms. In my opinion the Rowlatt Legislation, in spite of the amendments which, as the Select Committee very properly says, does not affect its principles, blocks the way to progress and

therefore to attainment of substantial reforms. To my mind the first thing needful is to claim a frank and full recognition of the principle that public opinion properly expressed shall be respected by the Government. I am no believer in the doctrine that the same power can at the same time trust and distrust, grant liberty and repress it. I have a right to interpret the coming reforms by the light that the Rowlatt Legislation throws upon them, and I make bold to promise that if we do not gather sufficient force to remove from our path this great obstacle in the shape of the Rowlatt legislation, we shall find the reforms to be a whitened sepulchre. Yet another objection to answer. Some friends have argued: "Your *Satyagraha* movement only accentuates the fear we have of the onrush of Bolshevism." The fact however is that, if anything can possibly prevent this calamity descending upon our country, it is *Satyagraha*. Bolshevism is the necessary result of modern materialistic civilisation. Its insensate worship of matter has given rise to a school which has been brought up to look upon materialistic advancement as the goal and which has lost all touch with the final things of life. Self-indulgence is the Bolshevic creed, self-restraint is the *Satyagraha* creed. If I can but induce the Nation to accept *Satyagraha* if only as a predominant factor in life, whether social or political, we need have no fear of the Bolshevic propaganda. In asking the Nation to accept *Satyagraha*, I am asking for the introduction in reality of nothing new. I have coined a new word for an ancient law that has hitherto mainly governed our lives, and I do prophesy that if we disobey the law of the final supremacy of the spirit over matter, of liberty and love over brute force, in a few years' time we shall have Bolshevism rampant in this land which was once so holy.

## THE DELHI INCIDENT

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Mr. Gandhi sent the following letter to the Press from Bombay, under date 4th April, 1919:—

It is alleged against the Delhi people assembled at the Delhi Railway Station : (1) that some of them were trying to coerce sweetmeat sellers into closing their stalls ; (2) that some were forcibly preventing people from plying tram-cars and other vehicles ; (3) that some of them threw brickbats ; (4) that the whole crowd that marched to the Station demanded the release of men who were said to be coercers and who were for that reason arrested at the instance of the Railway authorities ; (5) that the crowd declined to disperse when the Magistrate gave orders to disperse. I have read Sanyasi Swami Shradddhanandji's account of the tragedy. I am bound to accept it as true unless it is authoritatively proved to be otherwise and his account seems to me to deny the allegations 1, 2 and 3. But assuming the truth of all allegations, it does appear to me that the local authorities in Delhi have made use of a Nasmyth hammer to crush a fly. On their action, however, in firing on the crowd, I shall seek another opportunity of saying more. My purpose in writing this letter is merely to issue a note of warning to all *Satyagrahis*. I would therefore like to observe that the conduct described in the allegations 1 to 4, if true, would be inconsistent with the *Satyagraha* pledge. The conduct described in allegations can be consistent with the pledge, but if the allegation is true, the conduct was premature because

the Committee contemplated in the pledge has not decided upon the disobedience of orders that may be issued by the Magistrates under the Riot Act. I am anxious to make it as clear as I can that in this movement no pressure can be put upon people who do not wish to accept our suggestions and advice, the movement being essentially one to secure the greatest freedom for all *Satyagrahis* cannot forcibly demand release of those who might be arrested whether justly or unjustly. The essence of the pledge is to invite imprisonment and until the Committee decides upon the breach of the Riot Act, it is the duty of *Satyagrahis* to obey without making the slightest ado Magisterial orders to disperse, etc., and thus to demonstrate their law-abiding nature. I hope that the next Sunday at *Satyagraha* meetings, all speeches will be free from passion, anger or resentment. The movement depends for its success entirely upon perfect self-possession, self-restraint, absolute adherence to truth and unlimited capacity for self-suffering. Before closing this letter, I would add that in opposing the Rowlatt Legislation, *Satyagrahis* are resisting the spirit of terrorism which lies behind it and of which it is a most glaring symptom. The Delhi tragedy imposes an added responsibility upon *Satyagrahis* of steeling their hearts and going on with their struggle until the Rowlatt Legislation is withdrawn.

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## DISTRIBUTION OF PROHIBITED LITERATURE

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The *Satyagraha* Committee advised that, for the time being, laws regarding prohibited literature and registration of newspapers may be civilly disobeyed. Accordingly Mr. Gandhi, President, and Secretaries of the *Satyagraha* Sabha, Bombay, issued on April 7 the following notice to organise, regulate and control the sale of these publications :—

*Satyagrahis* should receive copies of prohibited literature for distribution. A limited number of copies can be had from the Secretaries of the *Satyagraha* Sabha. *Satyagrahis* should as far as possible write their names and addresses as sellers so that they may be traced easily when wanted by the Government for prosecution. Naturally there can be no question of secret sale of this literature. At the same time there should be no forwardness either in distributing it. It is open to *Satyagrahis* to form small groups of men and women to whom they may read this class of literature. The object in selecting prohibited literature is not merely to commit a civil breach of the law regarding it, but it is also to supply people with clean literature of a high moral value. It is expected that the Government will confiscate such. *Satyagrahis* have to be as independent of finance as possible. When therefore copies are confiscated, *Satyagrahis* are requested to make copies of prohibited literature themselves or by securing the assistance of willing friends and to make use of it until it is confiscated by giving readings to the people from it. It is stated that such readings would amount to dissemination of prohibited literature. When whole copies are exhausted by dissemination or confiscation, *Satyagrahis* may continue civil disobedience by writing out and distributing extracts from accessible books. . . .

## MESSAGE AFTER ARREST

Mr. Gandhi was arrested at Kosi on his way to Delhi on the morning of the 10th April and served with an order not to enter the Punjab and the district of Delhi and to restrict himself to the Bombay Presidency. The officer serving the order treated him most politely, assuring him it would be his most painful duty to arrest him if he elected to disobey, but that there would be no ill-will between them. Mr. Gandhi smilingly said that he must elect to disobey as it was his duty and that the officer ought also to do what was his duty. Mr. Gandhi then dictated the following message to Mr. Desai, his Secretary, laying special emphasis on his oral message that none shall resent his arrest or do anything tainted with untruth or violence which is sure to draw the sacred cause. The message read as follows :—

'To my countrymen,—It is a matter of the highest satisfaction to me, as I hope to you, that I have received an order from the Punjab Government not to enter that Province, and another from the Delhi Government not to enter Delhi, while an order of the Government of India has been served on me immediately after, which restricts me to Bombay. I had no hesitation in saying to the officer who served the order on me, that I was bound in virtue of the pledge to disregard it which I have done and I shall presently find myself a free man, my body being taken by them in their custody. It was galling to me to remain free whilst the Rowlatt Legislation disfigured the Statute-Book. My arrest makes me free. It now remains for you to do your duty which is clearly stated in the *Satyagraha* pledge. Follow it and you will find it will be your *Kamadhenu*. I hope there will be no resentment about my arrest. I have received what I was seeking, either withdrawal of the Rowlatt Legislation or imprisonment. A departure from truth by a hair's breadth, or violence committed against anybody, whether Englishman or Indian, will surely damn the great cause the *Satyagrahis* are handling. I hope the Hindu-Muslim unity, which

seems now to have taken firm hold of the people, will become a reality and I feel convinced that it will only be a reality if the suggestions I have ventured to make in my communication to the Press are carried out. The responsibility of the Hindus in the matter is greater than that of Muhammadans, they being in a minority and I hope they will discharge their responsibility in the manner worthy of their country. I have also made certain suggestions regarding the proposal of the *Swadeshi* vow. Now I commend them to your serious attention and you will find that, as your ideas of *Satyagraha* become matured, the Hindu-Muslim unity is but part of *Satyagraha*. Finally it is my firm belief that we shall obtain salvation only through suffering and not by reforms dropping on us from England, no matter how unstintingly they might be granted. The English are a great Nation, but the weaker also go to the wall if they come in contact with them. When they are themselves courageous they have borne untold sufferings and they only respond to courage and sufferings, and partnership with them is only possible after we have developed an indomitable courage and a faculty for unlimited suffering. There is a fundamental difference between their civilisation and ours. They believe in the doctrine of violence or brute force as the final arbiter. My reading of our civilisation is, that we are expected to believe in Soul Force or Moral Force as the final arbiter and this is *Satyagraha*. We are groaning under sufferings which we would avoid if we could, because we have swerved from the path laid down for us by our ancient civilisation. . . .

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## THE " SATYAGRAHI "

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The unregistered newspaper, the "*Satyagrahi*" which Mr. Gandhi as Editor brought out in Bombay on the 7th April in defiance of the Press Act, was only a small sheet of paper sold for one pice. It stated among other things: "The editor is liable at any moment to be arrested and it is impossible to ensure the continuity of publication until India is in a happy position of supplying editors enough to take the place of those who are arrested. It is not our intention to break for all time the laws governing the publication of newspapers. This paper will therefore exist so long only as the Rowlatt Legislation is not withdrawn." It also contained the following instruction to *Satyagrahis* :—

We are now in a position to expect to be arrested at any moment. It is therefore necessary to bear in mind that if any one is arrested he should, without causing any difficulty, allow himself to be arrested and, if summoned to appear before a Court, he should do so. No defence should be offered and no pleaders engaged in the matter. If a fine is imposed with the alternative of imprisonment, the imprisonment should be accepted. If only fine is imposed, it ought not to be paid; but his property, if he has any, should be allowed to be sold. There should be no demonstration of grief or otherwise made by the remaining *Satyagrahis* by reason of the arrest and imprisonment of their comrade. It cannot be too often repeated that we court imprisonment and we may not complain of it when we actually receive it. When once imprisoned, it is our duty to conform to all prison regulations as prison reform is no part of our campaign at the present moment. A *Satyagrahi* may not resort to surreptitious practices. All that the *Satyagrahis* do, can only and must be done openly.

## *SATYAGRAHA AND DURAGRAHA*

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Mr. Gandhi arrived in Bombay on the afternoon of the 11th April having been prevented from entering the Provinces of Punjab and Delhi. An order was soon after served on him requiring him to confine his activities within the limits of the Bombay Presidency. Having heard of the riots and the consequent bloodshed in different places, he caused the following message to be read at all the meetings that evening :—

I have not been able to understand the cause of so much excitement and disturbance that followed my detention. It is not *Satyagraha*. It is worse than *Duragraha*. Those who join *Satyagraha* demonstrations were bound one and all to refrain at all hazard from violence, not to throw stones or in any way whatever to injure anybody.

But in Bombay we have been throwing stones. We have obstructed tram-cars by putting obstacles in the way. This is not *Satyagraha*. We have demanded the release of about 50 men who had been arrested for deeds of violence. Our duty is chiefly to get ourselves arrested. It is breach of religious duty to endeavour to secure the release of those who have committed deeds of violence. We are not therefore justified on any grounds whatever in demanding the release of those who have been arrested. I have been asked whether a *Satyagrahi* is responsible for the results that follow from that movement. I have replied that they are. I therefore suggest that if we cannot conduct this movement without the slightest violence from our side, the movement might have to be abandoned, or it may be necessary to give it a different and still more restricted shape. It may be necessary to go even further..

The time may come for me to offer *Satyagraha* against ourselves. I would not deem it a disgrace that we die. I shall be pained to hear of the death of a *Satyagrahi*, but I shall consider it to be the proper sacrifice given for the sake of struggle. But if those who are not *Satyagrahis* who shall not have joined the movement, who are even against the movement, received any injury at all, every *Satyagrahi* will be responsible for that sinful injury. My responsibility will be a million times heavier. I have embarked upon the struggle with a due sense of responsibility.

I have just heard that some English gentlemen have been injured. Some may even have died from such injuries. If so, it would be a great blot on *Satyagraha*. For me, Englishmen too are our brethren. We can have nothing against them, and for me, since such as I have described are simply unbearable but I know how to offer *Satyagraha* against ourselves. As against ourselves, what kind of *Satyagraha* can I offer? I do not see what penance I can offer excepting that it is for me to fast and, if need be, by so doing to give up this body and thus prove the truth of *Satyagraha*. I appeal to you to peacefully disperse and to refrain from acts that may in any way bring disgrace upon the people of Bombay.

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## SPEECH AT AHMEDABAD

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The following is the full text of the speech Mr. Gandhi delivered at a meeting of the citizens of Ahmedabad, held at his Ashram, Sabarmati, on Monday the 14th April, 1919:—

Brothers,—The events that have happened in course of the last few days have been most disgraceful to Ahmedabad, and as all these things have happened in my name, I am ashamed of them, and those who have been responsible for them have thereby not honoured me but disgraced me. A rapier run through my body could hardly have pained me more. I have said times without number that *Satyagraha* admits of no violence, no pillage, no incendiarism; and still in the name of *Satyagraha* we burnt down buildings, forcibly captured weapons, extorted money, stopped trains, cut off telegraph wires, killed innocent people and plundered shops and private houses. If deeds such as these could save me from the prison-house or the scaffold, I should not like to be so saved. I do wish to say in all earnestness that violence has not secured my discharge. A most brutal rumour was set afloat that Anasuya Bai was arrested. The crowds were infuriated all the more and disturbance increased. You have thereby disgraced Anasuya Bai and, under the cloak of her arrest, heinous deeds have been done.

These deeds have not benefited the people in any way. They have done nothing but harm. The buildings burnt down were public property and they will naturally be rebuilt at our expense. The loss due to the shops remaining closed is also our loss. The terrorism prevailing in the

city due to Martial Law is also the result of this violence. It has been said that many innocent lives have been lost as a result of the operation of Martial Law. If this is a fact, then for that too, the deeds described above are responsible. It will thus be seen that the events that have happened, have done nothing but harm to us. Moreover, they have most seriously damaged the *Satyagraha* movement. Had an entirely peaceful agitation followed my arrest, the Rowlatt Act would have been out or on the point of being out of the Statute-Book to-day. It should not be a matter for surprise if the withdrawal of the Act is now delayed. When I was released on Friday, my plan was to start for Delhi again on Saturday to seek re-arrest and that would have been an accession of strength to the movement. Now, instead of going to Delhi, it remains to me to offer *Satyagraha* against our own people, and as it is my determination to offer *Satyagraha* even unto death for securing the withdrawal of the Rowlatt legislation, I think the occasion has arrived when I should offer *Satyagraha* against ourselves for the violence that has occurred. And I shall do so at the sacrifice of my body so long as we do not keep perfect peace and cease from violence to person and property. How can I seek imprisonment unless I have absolute confidence that we shall no longer be guilty of such errors! . . . .

It is alleged that I have without proper consideration persuaded thousands to join the movement. That allegation is, I admit, true to a certain extent, but to a certain extent only. It is open to anybody to say that: but for the *Satyagraha* campaign there would not have been this violence. For this I have already done a penance, to my mind an unendurable one, namely, that I have had to



postpone my visit to Delhi to seek re-arrest and I have also been obliged to suggest a temporary restriction of *Satyagraha* to a limited field. This has been more painful to me than a wound, but this penance is not enough and I have therefore decided to fast for three days, *i.e.*, 72 hours. I hope my fast will pain no one. I believe a seventy-two hours' fast is easier for me than a twenty-four hours' fast for you. And I have imposed on me a discipline which I can bear. If you really feel pity for the suffering that will be caused to me, I request that that pity should always restrain you from ever again being party to the criminal acts of which I have complained. . . .

It seems that the deeds I have complained of have been done in an organised manner. There seems to be a definite design about them, and I am sure that there must be some educated and clever man or men behind them. They may be educated but their education has not enlightened them. You have been misled into doing these deeds by such people. I advise you never to be so misguided, and I would ask them seriously to reconsider their views. To them and you, I commend my book *Hind Swarajya* which, as I understand, may be printed and published without infringing the law thereby.

Among the mill-hands, the spinners have been on strike for some days. I advise them to resume work immediately and to ask for increase if they want any, only after resuming work and in a reasonable manner. To resort to the use of force to get any increase is suicidal. I would specially advise all mill-hands to altogether eschew violence. It is their interest to do so, and I remind them of the promises made to Anasuya Bai and me, that they would ever refrain from violence. I hope that all will now resume work.

## TEMPORARY SUSPENSION OF THE MOVEMENT

The following speech advising temporary suspension of the *Satyagraha* movement was made by Mr. Gandhi at Bombay, on the 18th April 1919 :—

It is not without sorrow I feel compelled to advise the temporary suspension of civil disobedience. I give this advice not because I have less faith now in its efficacy but because I have, if possible, greater faith than before. It is my perception of the law of *Satyagraha* which impels me to suggest the suspension. I am sorry, when I embarked upon a mass movement, I underrated the forces of evil and I must now pause and consider how best to meet the situation. But whilst doing so, I wish to say that from a careful examination of the tragedy at Ahmedabad and Viramgaum, I am convinced that *Satyagraha* had nothing to do with the violence of the mob and that many swarmed round the banner of mischief raised by the mob, largely because of their affection for Anasuya Bai and myself. Had the Government in an unwise manner not prevented me from entering Delhi and so compelled me to disobey their orders, I feel certain that Ahmedabad and Viramgaum would have remained free from the horrors of the last week. In other words, *Satyagraha* has neither been the cause nor the occasion of the upheaval. If anything, the presence of *Satyagraha* has acted as a check ever so slight upon the previously existing lawless elements.

As regards events in the Punjab, it is admitted that they are unconnected with the *Satyagraha* movement. In the course of the *Satyagraha* struggle in South Africa, several thousands of indentured Indians had struck work. This was *Satyagraha* strike and therefore entirely peaceful and voluntary. Whilst the strike was going on, a strike of European miners,

railway employees, etc., was declared. Overtures were made to me to make common cause with the European strikers. As a *Satyagrahi* I did not require a moment's consideration to decline to do so. I went further, and for fear of our strike being classed with the strike of the Europeans in which methods of violence and use of arms found a prominent place, ours was suspended and *Satyagraha* from that moment came to be recognised by the Europeans of South Africa as an honourable and honest movement; in the words of General Smuts, a constitutional movement. I can do no less at the present critical moment. I would be untrue to *Satyagraha* if I allowed it by any action of mine to be used as an occasion for feeding violence, for embittering relations between the English and the Indians. Our *Satyagraha* must therefore now consist in ceaselessly helping the authorities in all the ways available to us as *Satyagrahis* to restore order and to curb lawlessness.

We must fearlessly spread the doctrine of *Satya* and *Ahimsa* and then and not till then shall we be able to undertake mass *Satyagraha*. My attitude towards the Rowlatt legislation remains unchanged. Indeed I do feel that the Rowlatt legislation is one of the many causes of the present unrest. But in a surcharged atmosphere I must refrain from examining these causes. The main and only purpose of this letter is to advise all *Satyagrahis* to temporarily suspend civil disobedience, to give Government effective co-operation in restoring order, and by preaching and practice to gain adherence to the fundamental principles mentioned above.

# NON-CO-OPERATION

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## THE PUNJAB AND KHILAFAT WRONGS

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In a public letter dated the 21st July, 1919, Mr. Gandhī announced that in response to the warnings conveyed to him by the Government of India and H. E. the Governor of Bombay that the resumption of civil disobedience was likely to be attended with serious consequences to public security and in response to the urgent pressure brought on him by Moderate leaders all over the country and some extremist colleagues, he decided not to resume civil resistance fearing a recrudescence of mob violence. But though further resistance was suspended, the course of events inevitably fed the rancour of the people. The disturbances which began in March at Delhi had spread to Lahore and Amritsar by the 10th April, where Martial Law was proclaimed on the 15th. Three other districts subsequently came under the military regime. The tragedy of Jallianwallah Bagh where an unarmed and defenceless crowd were fired on by General Dyer rankled in the minds of the people as an unwarrantable barbarity. Slowly again the news of the cruelties and indignities of the Martial law regime with its crawling orders and thundering sentences for trivial offences eked out and fed the flames of popular indignation. Meanwhile another specific grievance was added to the already long list. Nearly a year had elapsed since the declaration of Armistice in November 1918 and the treaty with Turkey was yet in the making. British opinion was supposed to be inimical to Turkey and the anxiety of Indian Muslims increased with the delay in the settlement. It was widely feared that the Allies wanted to deal a heavy blow on the suzerainty of the Sultan over Muslim peoples. The dismemberment of the Empire of the Khalifa is a thing unthinkable to the Muslim world. An Indian Khilafat movement was set on foot in which, somewhat to the embarrassment of many, Mr. Gandhi, who was already leading India in the Rowlatt and Punjab agitations, plunged with all the ardour of conviction. Thus the Punjab wrongs and the Khilafat question were the mainstay of a great agitation under the lead of Mr. Gandhi, assisted by the Congress, the Muslim League, the Khilafat Conference and their many subsidiary organisations all over the

country. But the peculiarity of Mr. Gandhi's lead was in his methods which were altogether novel in the history of agitations here or elsewhere. We shall have many occasions to refer to the non-co-operation movement and his innumerable speeches thereon, but we begin with the cardinal features in Mr. Gandhi's programme, which are fasting, prayer and *hartals*. Writing on October 4, 1919, in his *Young India*, Mr. Gandhi observed :

In spite of the herculean efforts made by the Punjab Government to crush the spirit of the people, prayer and fasting and *hartal* are institutions as old as the hills and cannot be stopped. Two illuminating abstracts from the bulky volumes published by the Government and containing a record of sentences inflicted by Martial Law Commissions and Summary Courts show, although dimly, what has happened during the past few months to the people of the Punjab. The leading cases examined by me have shaken my faith in the justice of these sentences. The sentence of stripes is beyond recall as are the 18 death sentences. Who will answer for them if they are proved to have been unjustly pronounced ?

But sentences or no sentences, the spirit of the people is unbreakable. The Moslem Conference of Lucknow has proclaimed Friday the 17th instant as a day of fasting and prayer. The preliminaries will be presently arranged. The day is to be called the Khilafat day. Mr. Andrews' letter shows clearly what the Khilafat question is and how just is the case of the Muhammadans. He agrees with the suggestion I have ventured to make, viz., that if justice cannot be obtained for Turkey, Mr. Montagu and Lord Chelmsford must resign. But better than resignation, better than protests are the prayers of the just. I therefore welcome the Lucknow resolution. Prayer expresses the soul's longing and fasting sets the soul free for efficacious prayer. In my opinion, a national fast and national prayer should be accompanied by suspension of business. I therefore

without hesitation advise suspension of business provided it is carried out with calmness and dignity and provided it is entirely voluntary. . . . .

It goes without saying that it is the bounden duty of the Hindus and other religious denominations to associate themselves with their Muhammadan brethren. It is the surest and simplest method of bringing about the Hindu-Muhammadan unity. It is the privilege of friendship to extend the hand of fellowship, and adversity is the crucible in which friendship is tested. Let millions of Hindus show to the Muhammadans that they are one with them in sorrow.

I would respectfully urge the Government to make common cause with the people and encourage and regulate this peaceful exhibition of their feelings. Let the people not think that Government will put any obstacles directly or indirectly in their way.

I would urge the modern generation not to regard fasting and prayer with scepticism or distrust. The greatest teachers of the world have derived extraordinary powers for the good of humanity and attained clarity of vision through fasting and prayer. Much of this discipline runs to waste, because instead of being a matter of the heart, it is often resorted to for stage effect. I would therefore warn the bodies of this movement against any such suicidal manoeuvring. Let them have a living faith in what they urge or let them drop it. We are now beginning to attract millions of our countrymen. We shall deserve their curses if we consciously lead them astray. Whether Hindus or Muhammadans, we have all got the religious spirit in us. Let it not be undermined by our playing at religion.

## AMRITSAR APPEALS

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Before the end of the year, Indian opinion was greatly exasperated by the evidence of General Dyer and other Martial Law administrators before the Hunter Committee which began the enquiry about the end of October. The evidence of the military officers shocked the sentiments of the public which were horrified by the revelations of cruelty and heartlessness. When the Congress met at Amritsar, the scene of the tragedy, feeling ran high and the President, Pandit Motilal Nehru, drew up a lengthy indictment against the Government. Just before the day of the session the political prisoners were released as the effect of a Royal Proclamation and Mr. Gandhi exercised a sobering influence over the Congress and even moved a resolution condemning mob excesses though under provocation. But soon after the Congress, when he found that the fate of the other prisoners was decreed by the Privy Council's dismissal of their appeals without further trial, he wrote to the Press earnestly urging justice for the victims of Martial Law :

So these appeals have been dismissed. The Privy Council has confirmed lawless procedure. I must confess that the judgment does not come upon me quite as a surprise though the remarks of the judges, as Sir Simon was developing his arguments on behalf of the appellants, led one to expect a favourable verdict. My opinion based upon a study of political cases is, that the judgments even of the highest tribunals are not unaffected by subtle political considerations. The most elaborate precautions taken to procure a purely judicial mind must break down at critical moments. The Privy Council cannot be free from the limitations of all human institutions which are good enough only for normal conditions. The consequences of a decision favourable to the people would have exposed the Indian Government to indescribable discredit from which it would have been difficult to free itself for a generation.

Its political significance can be gauged from the fact that as soon as the news was received in Lahore, all the

preparations that were made to accord a fitting welcome to Lala Lajpat Rai were immediately cancelled and the capital of the Punjab was reported to be in deep mourning. Deeper discredit, therefore, now attaches to the Government by reason of the judgment, because rightly or wrongly the popular opinion will be that there is no justice under the British constitution when large political or racial considerations are involved.

There is only one way to avoid the catastrophe. The human and especially the Indian mind quickly responds to generosity. I hope that, without the necessity of an agitation or petitions, the Punjab Government or the Central Government will immediately cancel the death sentences and, if at all possible, simultaneously set the appellants free.

This is required by two considerations, each equally important. The first is that of restoring public confidence which I have already mentioned. The second is fulfilment of the Royal Proclamation to the letter. That great political document orders the release of all the political offenders who may not by their release prove a danger to society. No one can possibly suggest that the twenty-one appellants will, if they are set free, in any shape or form constitute a danger to society. They never had committed any crimes before. Most of them were regarded as respectable and orderly citizens. They were not known to belong to any revolutionary society. If they committed any crimes at all, they were committed only under the impulse of the moment and under what to them was grave provocation. Moreover, the public believe that the majority of the convictions by the Martial Law Tribunals were unsupported by any good evidence. I therefore hope that the Government, which have so far been doing well in discharging political



offenders even when they were caught in the act, will not hesitate to release these appellants and thus earn the good will of the whole of India. It is an act of generosity done in the hour of triumph which is the most effective. And in the popular opinion this dismissal of the appeal has been regarded as a triumph for the Government.

I would respectfully plead with the Punjab friends not to lose heart. We must calmly prepare ourselves for the worst. If the convictions are good, if the men convicted have been guilty of murders or incitements to murder, why should they escape punishment? If they have not committed these crimes as we believe most at least have not, why should we escape the usual fate of all who are trying to rise a step higher? Why should we fear the sacrifice if we would rise? No nations have ever risen without sacrifice and sacrifice can only be spoken of in connection with innocence and not with crime.

## THE KHILAFAT QUESTION

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In the first week of March 1920, Mr. Gandhi issued the following manifesto regarding the Khilafat question. In the manifesto Mr. Gandhi enunciated the duty of the Muslims as indeed of all India in case the agitation should fail to secure the redress of the Khilafat wrong:

The Khilafat question has now become a question of questions. It has become an imperial question of the first magnitude.

The great prelates of England and the Muhammadan leaders combined have brought the question to the fore. The prelates threw down the challenge. The Muslim leaders have taken it up.

I trust the Hindus will realise that the Khilafat question overshadows the Reforms and everything else.

If the Muslim claim was unjust apart from the Muslim scriptures, one might hesitate to support it merely on scriptural authority. But when a just claim is supported by scriptures, it becomes irresistible.

Briefly put, the claim is that the Turks should retain European Turkey subject to full guarantees for the protection of non-Muslim races under the Turkish Empire and that the Sultan should control the Holy places of Islam and should have suzerainty over Jazirat-ul-Aras, i.e., Arabia as defined by the Moslem savants, subject to self-governing rights being given to the Arabs if they so desire. This was what was promised by Mr. Lloyd George and this was what Lord Hardinge had contemplated. The Muhammadan soldiers would not have fought to deprive Turkey of her possessions. To deprive the Khalif of this suzerainty is to reduce the Khilafat to a nullity.

To restore to Turkey subject to necessary guarantees what was hers before war is a Christian solution. To wrest any of her possessions from her for the sake of punishing her is a gunpowder solution. The Allies or England in the hour of her triumph must be scrupulously just. To reduce the Turks to impotence would be not only unjust, it would be a breach of solemn declarations and promises. It is to be wished that the Viceroy will take his courage in both his hands and place himself at the head of the Khilafat agitation as Lord Hardinge did at the time of the South African Passive Resistance struggle and thus, like his predecessor, give a clear and emphatic direction to an agitation which under impulsive or faulty leadership may lead to disastrous consequences.

But the situation rests more with us Hindus and Muhammadans than with the Viceroy and still more with the Moslem leaders than with the Hindus or the Viceroy.

There are signs already of impatience on the part of Muslim friends and impatience may any day be reduced to madness and the latter must inevitably lead to violence. And I wish I could persuade every one to see that violence is suicide.

Supposing the Muslim demands are not granted by the Allies or say England? I see nothing but hope in Mr. Montagu's brave defence of the Muslim position and Mr. Lloyd George's interpretation of his own declaration. True, the latter is halting but he can secure full justice under it. But we must suppose the worst and expect and strive for the best. How to strive is the question. . . . .

The barbarous method is warfare open or secret. This must be ruled out if only because it is impracticable. If I could but persuade every one that it is always

bad, we should gain all lawful ends much quicker. The power that an individual or a nation forswearing violence generates, is a power that is irresistible. But my argument to-day against violence is based upon pure expediency.

Non-co-operation is therefore the only remedy left open to us. It is the clearest remedy as it is the most effective when it is absolutely free from all violence. It becomes a duty when co-operation means degradation or humiliation or an injury to one's cherished religious sentiments. England cannot expect a meek submission by us to an unjust usurpation of rights which to Mussalmans means matters of life and death. We may therefore begin at the top as also the bottom. Those who are holding offices of honour or emoluments ought to give them up. Those who belong to the menial services under the Government should do likewise. Non-co-operation does not apply to service under private individuals. I cannot approve of the threat of ostracism against those who do not adopt the remedy of non-co-operation. It is only a voluntary withdrawal which is effective. For, voluntary withdrawal alone is a test of popular feeling and dissatisfaction. Advice to the soldier to refuse to serve is premature. It is the last, not the first step. We should be entitled to take that step when the Viceroy, the Secretary of State and the Premier desert us. Moreover, every step in withdrawing co-operation has to be taken with the greatest deliberation. We must proceed slowly so as to ensure the retention of self-control under the fiercest heat. . . . .

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## THE PUNJAB DISORDERS: A PERSONAL STATEMENT

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The Report of the Commissioners appointed by the Sub-Committee of the Congress in November 1919 to enquire into the Punjab disorders together with the evidence taken by them was published in May 1920. The Report was signed by M. K. Gandhi, C. R. Das, Abbas Tyabji and M. R. Jayakar who had examined over 1,700 cases and selected about 650 statements for publication. The inclusion of Mr. Gandhi's name among the Commissioners was accepted by all as a guarantee for accuracy. The report bears the impress of Mr. Gandhi's hands and though it was the joint production of all the Commissioners, it was at once conceded that Mr. Gandhi's share alike in the examination and sifting of evidence and in drawing the conclusions was considerable. In the course of the Report, the Commissioners discuss how far *Satyagraha* was responsible for violent excesses in the Punjab. Mr. Gandhi as the pioneer and the supreme exponent of the movement, after expounding the methods and the efficacy of "The Law of Love" as the governing law of life, goes on to narrate the immediate cause of all the trouble in the Punjab and the part he took in the momentous transactions of the time :

When the Rowlatt Bills were published, I felt that they were so restrictive of human liberty that they must be resisted to the utmost. I observed, too, that the opposition to them was universal among Indians. I submit that no State, however despotic, has the right to enact laws which are repugnant to the whole body of the people, much less a Government guided by constitutional usage and precedent such as the Indian Government. I felt, too, that the oncoming agitation needed a definite direction if it was neither to collapse nor to run into violent channels.

I ventured therefore to present *Satyagraha* to the country, emphasising its civil resistance aspect. And as it is purely an inward and purifying tonic, I suggested the observance of fast, prayer and suspension of all work for one

day, April 6. There was a magnificent response throughout the length and breadth of India even in little villages, although there was no organisation and no great previous preparation. The idea was given to the public as soon as it was conceived. On April 6 there was no violence used by the people and no collision with the police worth naming. The *hartal* was purely voluntary and spontaneous.

#### THE "ARREST"

The observance of April 6 was to be followed by civil disobedience. For that purpose the Committee of the *Satyagraha Sabha* had selected certain laws for disobedience. And we commenced the distribution of prohibited literature of a perfectly healthy type, *e.g.*, a pamphlet written by me on Home Rule, a translation of Ruskin's "Unto this Last," and "Defence and Death of Socrates".

But there is no doubt that April 6 found India vitalised as never before. The people who were fear-stricken ceased to fear authority. Moreover hitherto the masses had lain inert. The leaders had not really acted upon them. They were undisciplined. They had found a new force but they did not know what it was and how to use it.

At Delhi, the leaders found it difficult to restrain the very large number of people who had remained unmoved before. At Amritsar, Mr. Satyapal was anxious that I should go there and show to the people the peaceful nature of *Satyagraha*. Swami Shraddhanandji from Delhi and Dr. Satyapal from Amritsar wrote to me asking me to go to their respective places for pacifying the people and for explaining to them the nature of *Satyagraha*. I had never been to Amritsar and for that matter to the Punjab before. These two messages were seen by the authorities and they

knew that I was invited to both the places for peaceful purposes.

I left Bombay for Delhi and the Punjab on April 8 and had telegraphed to Satyapal whom I had never met before to meet me at Delhi. But after passing Muttra, I was served with an order prohibiting me from entering the province of Delhi. I felt that I was bound to disregard this order and I proceeded on my journey. At Palwal, I was served with an order prohibiting me from entering the Punjab and confining me to the Bombay Presidency. And I was arrested by a party of police and taken off the train at that station. The Superintendent of Police who arrested me acted with every courtesy. I was taken to Muttra by the first available train and thence by goods train early in the morning to Siwai Madhupur where I joined the Bombay mail from Peshawar and was taken charge of by Superintendent Bowring. I was discharged at Bombay on April 10.

But the people at Ahmedabad and Viramgaum and in Gujarat generally had heard of my arrest. They became furious, shops were closed, crowds gathered, and murder, arson, pillage, wire-cutting, and attempt at derailment followed.

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## HOW TO WORK NON-CO-OPERATION

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Mr. Gandhi wrote the following article in *Young India*, May 5, 1920, explaining the proposed working of the movement of non-co-operation through successive stages :

Perhaps the best way of answering the fears and criticism as to non-co-operation is to elaborate more fully the scheme of non-co-operation. The critics seem to imagine that the organisers propose to give effect to the whole scheme at once. The fact however is that the organisers have fixed definite, progressive four stages. The first is the giving up of titles and resignation of honorary posts. If there is no response or if the response received is not effective, recourse will be had to the second stage. The second stage involves much previous arrangement. Certainly not a single servant will be called out unless he is either capable of supporting himself and his dependants or the Khilafat Committee is able to bear the burden. All the classes of servants will not be called out at once and never will any pressure be put upon a single servant to withdraw himself from the Government service. Nor will a single private employee be touched for the simple reason that the movement is not anti-English. It is not even anti-Government. Co-operation is to be withdrawn because the people must not be party to a wrong—a broken pledge—a violation of a deep religious sentiment. Naturally, the movement will receive a check if there is any undue influence brought to bear upon any Government servant or if any violence is used or countenanced by any member of the Khilafat Committee. The second stage must be entirely successful if the response is at all on an adequate scale. For no.



Government—much less the Indian Government—can subsist if the people cease to serve it. The withdrawal therefore of the police and the military—the third stage—is a distant goal. The organisers however wanted to be fair, open and above suspicion. They did not want to keep back from their Government or the public a single step they had in contemplation even as a remote contingency. The fourth, *i.e.*, suspension of taxes is still more remote. The organisers recognise that suspension of general taxation is fraught with the greatest danger. It is likely to bring sensitive classes in conflict with the police. They are therefore not likely to embark upon it unless they can do so with the assurance that there will be no violence offered by the people.

I admit, as I have already done, that non-co-operation is not unattended with risk, but the risk of supineness in the face of a grave issue is infinitely greater than the danger of violence ensuing from organizing non-co-operation. To do nothing is to invite violence for a certainty.

It is easy enough to pass resolutions or write articles condemning non-co-operation. But it is no easy task to restrain the fury of a people incensed by a deep sense of wrong. I urge those who talk or work against non-co-operation to descend from their chairs and go down to the people, learn their feelings and write, if they have the heart, against non-co-operation. They will find, as I have found, that the only way to avoid violence is to enable them to give such expression to their feelings as to compel redress. I have found nothing save non-co-operation. It is logical and harmless. It is the inherent right of a subject to refuse to assist a Government that will not listen to him.

Non-co-operation as a voluntary movement can only succeed if the feeling is genuine and strong enough to make people suffer to the utmost. If the religious sentiment of the Mahomedans is deeply hurt and if the Hindus entertain neighbourly regard towards their Muslim brethren, they will both count no cost too great for achieving the end. Non-co-operation will not only be an effective remedy but will also be an effective test of the sincerity of the Muslim claim and the Hindu profession of friendship.

There is however one formidable argument urged by friends against my joining the Khilafat movement. They say that it ill becomes me, a friend of the English and an admirer of the British constitution, to join hands with those who are to-day filled with nothing but ill-will against the English. I am sorry to have to confess that the ordinary Mahomedan entertains to-day no affection for Englishmen. He considers, not without some cause, that they have not played the game. But if I am friendly towards Englishmen, I am no less so towards my countrymen, the Mahomedans. And as such they have a greater claim upon my attention than Englishmen. My personal religion however enables me to serve my countrymen without hurting Englishmen or for that matter anybody else. What I am not prepared to do to my blood brother I would not do to an Englishman. I would not injure him to gain a kingdom. But I would withdraw co-operation from him if it became necessary as I had withdrawn from my own brother (now deceased) when it became necessary. I serve the Empire by refusing to partake in its wrong. William Stead offered public prayers for British reverses at the time of the Boer War, because he considered that the nation to which he belonged was engaged in an unrighteous war. The present Prime Minister risked his life in opposing that war and

did everything he could to obstruct his own Government in its prosecution. And to-day if I have thrown in my lot with the Mahomedans a large number of whom bear no friendly feelings towards the British, I have done so frankly as a friend of the British and with the object of gaining justice and of thereby showing the capacity of the British constitution to respond to every honest determination when it is coupled with suffering. I hope by my alliance with the Mahomedans to achieve a threefold end: to obtain justice in the face of odds with the method of *Satyagraha* and to show its efficacy over all other methods, to secure Mahomedan friendship for the Hindus and thereby internal peace also, and last but not least to transform ill-will into affection for the British and their constitution which, in spite of its imperfections, has weathered many a storm. I may fail in achieving any of the ends. I can but attempt. God alone can grant success. It will not be denied that the ends are all worthy. I invite Hindus and Englishmen to join me in a full-hearted manner in shouldering the burden the Mahomedans of India are carrying. Their's is admittedly a just fight. The Viceroy, the Secretary of State, the Maharaja of Bikaner and Lord Sinha have testified to it. Time has arrived to make good the testimony. People with a just cause are never satisfied with a mere protest. They have been known to die for it. Are a high-spirited people, the Mahomedans, expected to do less?

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## OPEN LETTER TO LORD CHELMSFORD

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The Turkish Peace Treaty was handed to the Ottoman Delegation on the 11th May 1920, at Paris, and the terms of that treaty were published in India on the 14th with a message from H. E. the Viceroy to the Muslim people of India. According to the proposals, Turkey was to be dismembered and Constantinople alone was saved for the Sultan to whom only a fringe of territory was conceded for the defence of his capital. The actual terms were a total violation of the promises (Lloyd George's pledge) not to deprive Turkey "of the rich and renowned lands of Asia Minor and Thrace". In reply to the Viceroy's message of sympathy, Mr. Gandhi invited His Excellency to lead the agitation :

Your Excellency,—As one who has enjoyed a certain measure of Your Excellency's confidence and as one who claims to be a devoted well-wisher of the British Empire, I owe it to Your Excellency, and through Your Excellency to His Majesty's ministers, to explain my connection with and my conduct in the Khilafat question.

At the very earliest stage of the War, even while I was in London organising the Indian Volunteer Ambulance Corps, I began to interest myself in the Khilafat question. I perceived how deeply moved the Mussalman world in London was when Turkey decided to throw in her lot with Germany. On my arrival in January of 1915 I found the same anxiousness and earnestness among the Mussalmans with whom I came in contact. Their anxiety became intense when the information about the secret treaties leaked out. Distrust of British intentions filled their minds and despair took possession of them. Even at that moment I advised my Mussalman friends not to give way to despair but to express their fears and their hopes in a disciplined manner. It will be admitted that the whole of

the Mussalman India has behaved in a singularly restrained manner during the past five years and that the leaders have been able to keep the turbulent sections of their community under complete control.

#### MOSLEMS SHOCKED

The peace terms and Your Excellency's defence of them have given the Mussalmans of India a shock from which it will be difficult for them to recover. The terms violate the ministerial pledges and utterly disregard Mussalman sentiment. I consider that, as a staunch Hindu wishing to live on terms of the closest friendship with my Mussalman countrymen, I should be an unworthy son of India if I did not stand by them in their hour of trial. In my humble opinion their cause is just. They claim that Turkey must not be punished if their sentiment is to be respected. Muslim soldiers did not fight to inflict punishment on their own Khalifa or to deprive him of his territories. The Mussalman attitude has been consistent throughout these five years.

My duty to the Empire, to which I owe my loyalty, requires me to resist the cruel violence that has been done to the Mussalman sentiment so far as I am aware. Mussalmans and Hindus have, as a whole, lost faith in British justice and honour. The report of the majority of the Hunter Committee, Your Excellency's despatch thereon and Mr. Montagu's reply have only aggravated the distrust.

#### THE ONLY COURSE

In these circumstances, the only course open to one like me is either in despair to sever all connection with British rule or, if I still retained faith in the inherent superiority of the British constitution to all others at present in vogue, to adopt such means as will rectify the wrong done and thus restore confidence. I have not lost faith in such

superiority and I am not without hope that somehow or other justice will yet be rendered if we show the requisite capacity for suffering. Indeed, my conception of that constitution is that it helps only those who are ready to help themselves. I don't believe that it protects the weak. It gives free scope to the strong to maintain their strength and develop it. The weak under it go to the wall.

It is then because I believe in the British constitution that I have advised my Mussalman friends to withdraw their support from Your Excellency's Government and the Hindus to join them should the peace terms not be revised in accordance with the solemn pledges of ministers and the Muslim sentiment. Three courses were open to the Mahomedans in order to mark their emphatic disapproval of the utter injustice to which His Majesty's ministers have become a party if they have not actually been the prime perpetrators of it. They are :

1. To resort to violence.
2. To advise emigration on a wholesale scale.
3. Not to be a party to the injustice by ceasing to co-operate with the Government.

#### NON-CO-OPERATION

Your Excellency must be aware that there was a time when the boldest, though also the most thoughtless, among the Mussalman favoured violence and that *Hijrat* (emigration) has not yet ceased to be the battle-cry. I venture to claim that I have succeeded by patient reasoning in weaning the party of violence from its ways. I confess that I did not—I did not attempt to—succeed in weaning them from violence on moral grounds but purely on utilitarian grounds. The result for the time being at any rate has, however, been to stop violence. The school of *Hijrat* has received a check if it has not stopped its activity entirely. I hold that no

repression could have prevented a violent eruption if the people had not presented to them a form of direct action involving considerable sacrifice and ensuing success if such direct action was largely taken up by the public. Non-co-operation was the only dignified and constitutional form of such direct action. For it is the right recognised from times immemorial of the subject to refuse to assist a ruler who misrules.

At the same time I admit that non-co-operation practised by the mass of people is attended with grave risks. But in a crisis such as has overtaken the Mussalmans of India, no step that is unattended with large risks can possibly bring about the desired change. Not to run some risks will be to court much greater risks if not virtual destruction of law and order.

But there is yet an escape from non-co-operation. The Mussalman representation has requested Your Excellency to lead the agitation yourself as did your distinguished predecessor at the time of the South African trouble. But if you cannot see your way to do so, non-co-operation becomes a dire necessity. I hope Your Excellency will give those who have accepted my advice and myself the credit for being actuated by nothing less than a stern sense of duty.

I have the honour to remain,  
Your Excellency's obdt. servant,  
(Sd.) M. K. GANDHI.

Laburnum Road,  
Gamdevi, Bombay,  
22nd June, 1920.

## THE HUNTER REPORT

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The Report of the Hunter Committee together with the Government of India's Despatch was published on the 3rd May, 1920, and the Secretary of State's reply followed on the 26th. As was expected, the Indian members of the Committee submitted a separate Report, the Hon. Mr. Shafi (later Sir Mahomed) writing a strong dissenting minute to the Government of India's despatch. Mr. Montagu in his Despatch condemned the severity of the martial law administration and the excesses of General Dyer's action at Jallianwallah Bagh and laid down in unmistakable terms the principle which ought to govern the policy of His Majesty's Government in similar cases in the future. Mr. Gandhi, disappointed at and stung by the injustice of the Government, threw out the challenge that "a scandal of this magnitude cannot be tolerated by the nation, if it is to preserve its self-respect and become a free partner in the Empire". He wrote in *Young India*, dated the 9th June, 1920:

Freemasonry is a secret brotherhood which has, more by its secret and iron rules than by its service to humanity, obtained a hold upon some of the best minds. Similarly there seems to be some secret code of conduct governing the official class in India before which the flower of the great British nation fall prostrate and unconsciously become instruments of injustice which, as private individuals, they would be ashamed of perpetrating. In no other way is it possible for one to understand the majority report of the Hunter Committee, the despatch of the Government of India and the reply thereto of the Secretary of State for India. In spite of the energetic protests of a section of the Press to the personnel of the Committee, it might be said that on the whole the public were prepared to trust it, especially as it contained three Indian members who could fairly be claimed to be independent. The first rude shock to this confidence was delivered by the



refusal of Lord Hunter's Committee to accept the very moderate and reasonable demand of the Congress Committee that the imprisoned Punjab leaders might be allowed to appear before it to instruct counsel. Any doubt that might have been left in the mind of any person has been dispelled by the report of the majority of that Committee. The result has justified the attitude of the Congress Committee. The evidence collected by it shows what Lord Hunter's Committee purposely denied itself.

The minority report stands out like an oasis in a desert. The Indian members deserve the congratulation of their countrymen for having dared to do their duty in the face of heavy odds. I wish that they had refused to associate themselves even in a modified manner with the condemnation of the civil disobedience form of *Satyagraha*. The defiant spirit of the Delhi mob on the 30th March, 1919, can hardly be used for condemning a great spiritual movement which is admittedly and manifestly intended to restrain the violent tendencies of mobs and to replace criminal lawlessness by civil disobedience of authority when it has forfeited all title to respect. On the 30th March civil disobedience had not even been started. Almost every great popular demonstration has been hitherto attended all the world over by a certain amount of lawlessness. The demonstration of 30th March and 6th April could have been held under any other aegis as under that of *Satyagraha*. I hold that without the advent of the spirit of civility and orderliness, the disobedience would have taken a much more violent form than it did even at Delhi. It was only the wonderfully quick acceptance by the people of the principle of *Satyagraha* that effectively checked the spread of violence throughout the length and breadth of India.

And even to-day it is not the memory of the black barbarity of General Dyer that is keeping the undoubted restlessness among the people from breaking forth into violence. The hold that *Satyagraha* has gained on the people—it may be even against their will—is curbing the forces of disorder and violence. But I must not detain the reader on a defence of *Satyagraha* against unjust attacks. If it has gained a foothold in India, it will survive much fiercer attacks than the one made by the majority of the Hunter Committee and somewhat supported by the minority. Had the majority report been defective only in this direction and correct in every other, there would have been nothing but praise for it. After all, *Satyagraha* is a new experiment in political field. And a hasty attributing to it of any popular disorder would have been pardonable.

The universally pronounced adverse judgment upon the report and the despatches rests upon far more painful revelations. Look at the manifestly laboured defence of every official act of inhumanity except where condemnation could not be avoided through the impudent admissions made by the actors themselves; look at the special pleading introduced to defend General Dyer even against himself; look at the vain glorification of Sir Michael O'Dwyer although it was his spirit that actuated every act of criminality on the part of the subordinates; look at the deliberate refusal to examine his wild career before the events of April. His acts were an open book of which the Committee ought to have taken judicial notice. Instead of accepting everything that the officials had to say, the Committee's obvious duty was to tax itself to find out the real cause of the disorders. It ought to have gone out of its way to search out the inwardness of the events. Instead of patiently going behind the hard crust of official documents,

the Committee allowed itself to be guided with criminal laziness by mere official evidence. The report and the despatches, in my humble opinion, constitute an attempt to condone official lawlessness. The cautious and half-hearted condemnation pronounced upon General Dyer's massacre and the notorious crawling order only deepens the disappointment of the reader as he goes through page after page of thinly disguised official whitewash. I need however scarcely attempt any elaborate examination of the report or the despatches which have been so justly censured by the whole national Press whether of the moderate or the extremist hue. The point to consider is how to break down this secret—the secrecy ever so unconscious—conspiracy to uphold official iniquity. A scandal of this magnitude cannot be tolerated by the nation if it is to preserve its self-respect and become a free partner in the Empire. The All-India Congress Committee has resolved upon convening a special session of the Congress for the purpose of considering among other things the situation arising from the report. In my opinion the time has arrived when we must cease to rely upon mere petition to Parliament for effective action. Petitions will have value when the nation has behind it the power to enforce its will. What power then have we? When we are firmly of opinion that grave wrong has been done us and when after an appeal to the highest authority we fail to secure redress, there must be some power available to us for undoing the wrong. It is true that in the vast majority of cases it is the duty of a subject to submit to wrongs on failure of the usual procedure so long as they do not affect his vital being. But every nation and every individual has the right and it is their duty to rise against an intolerable wrong. I do not believe in armed risings.

They are a remedy worse than the disease sought to be cured. They are a token of the spirit of revenge and impatience and anger. The method of violence cannot do good in the long run. Witness the effect of the armed rising of the allied powers against Germany. Have they not become even like the Germans as the latter have been depicted to us by them ?

We have a better method. Unlike that of violence it certainly involves the exercise of restraint and patience ; but it requires also resoluteness of will. This method is to refuse to be party to the wrong. No tyrant has ever yet succeeded in his purpose without carrying the victim with him, it may be, as it often is, by force. Most people choose rather to yield to the will of the tyrant than to suffer for the consequence of reticence. Hence does terrorism form part of the stock-in-trade of the tyrant. But we have instances in history where terrorism has failed to impose the terrorist's will upon his victim. India has the choice before her now. If then the acts of the Punjab Government be an insufferable wrong, if the report of Lord Hunter's Committee and the two despatches be a greater wrong by reason of their grievous condonation of these acts, it is clear that we must refuse to submit to this official violence. Appeal the Parliament by all means if necessary, but if the Parliament fails us and if we are worthy to call ourselves a nation, we must refuse to uphold the Government by withdrawing co-operation from it.

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## FROM SATYAGRAHA TO NON-CO-OPERATION

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Mr. Gandhi expatiated on the new movement of Non-Co-operation and defined how it was a natural outcome of the movement of *Satyagraha*. He wrote in *Young India* :

*Satyagraha* is literally holding on to Truth, and it means therefore Truth-force. Truth is soul or spirit. It is therefore known as soul-force. It excludes the use of violence, because man is not capable of knowing the absolute truth and therefore not competent to punish. The word was coined in South Africa to distinguish the non-violent resistance of the Indians of South Africa from the contemporary passive resistance of the suffragettes and others. It is not conceived as a weapon of the weak.

Passive resistance is used in the orthodox English sense and covers the suffragette movement as well as the resistance of the non-Conformists. Passive resistance has been conceived and is regarded as a weapon of the weak. Whilst it avoids violence being not open to the weak, it does not exclude its use if, in the opinion of a passive resister, the occasion demands it. However it has always been distinguished from armed resistance and its application was at one time confined to Christian martyrs.

Civil disobedience is civil breach of unmoral statutory enactments. The expression was, so far as I am aware, coined by Thoreau to signify his own resistance to the laws of a slave state. He has left a masterly treatise on the duty of civil disobedience. But Thoreau was not perhaps an out and out champion of

non-violence. Probably also Thoreau limited his breach of statutory laws to the revenue law, *i.e.*, payment of taxes. Whereas the term civil disobedience as practised in 1919 covered a breach of any statutory and unmoral law. It signified the resister's outlawry in a civil, *i.e.*, non-violent manner. He invoked the sanctions of the law and cheerfully suffered imprisonment. It is a branch of *Satyagraha*.

Non-co-operation predominantly implies withdrawing of co-operation from the State, that in the non-co-operator's view has become corrupt and excludes civil disobedience of the fierce type described above. By its very nature, non-co-operation is even open to children of understanding and can be safely practised by the masses. Civil disobedience presupposes the habit of willing obedience to laws without fear of their sanctions. It can therefore be practised only as a last resort and by a select few in the first instance at any rate. Non-co-operation too like civil disobedience is a branch of *Satyagraha* which includes all non-violent resistance for the vindication of Truth.

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## THE FIRST OF AUGUST, 1920

Mr. Gandhi heralded the advent of Non-Co-operation in these words in the pages of *Young India* of 28th July 1920 :

Many people dread the advent of Non-Co-operation because of the events of last year. They fear madness from the mob and consequent repetition of last year's reprisals almost unsurpassed in their ferocity in the history of modern times. Personally I do not mind Governmental fury as I mind mob fury. The latter is a sign of national distemper and therefore more difficult to deal with than the former which is confined to a small corporation. It is easier to oust a Government that has rendered itself unfit to govern than it is to cure unknown people in a mob of their madness. But great movements cannot be stopped altogether because a Government or a people or both go wrong. We learn and profit through our mistakes and failures. No General worth the name gives up a battle because he has suffered reverses, or which is the same thing, made mistakes. And so we must approach non-co-operation with confidence and hope. As in the past, the commencement is to be marked by fasting and prayer—a sign of the religious character of the demonstration. . . . .

The giving up of titles and honorary posts should also commence from the first of August. Doubt has been expressed as to the sufficiency of notice regarding surrender of titles and honorary posts. It is however quickly dispelled by bearing in mind that the first of August marks the commencement of the surrender of titles. It is not the only day on which surrender has to take place. Indeed, I do not expect a very large response on the first day. A vigorous propaganda will have to be carried on and the message delivered to every title or post holder and

the argument presented to him proving the duty of such surrender.

But the greatest thing in this campaign of non-co-operation is to evolve order, discipline, co-operation among the people, co-ordination among the workers. Effective non-co-operation depends upon complete organisation. Thousands of men who have filled meetings throughout the Punjab have convinced me that the people want to withdraw co-operation from the Government, but they must know how. Most people do not understand the complicated machinery of the Government. They do not realise that every citizen silently but nonetheless certainly sustains the Government of the day in ways of which he has no knowledge. Every citizen therefore renders himself responsible for every act of his Government. And it is quite proper to support it so long as the actions of the Government are bearable. But when they hurt him and his nation, it becomes his duty to withdraw his support.

But as I have said, every citizen does not know how to do so in an orderly manner. Disorderliness comes from anger, orderliness out of intelligent resistance. The first condition therefore of real success is to ensure entire absence of violence. Violence done to persons representing the Government or to persons who don't join our ranks, *i.e.*, the supporters of the Government, means in every case retrogression in our case, cessation of non-co-operation and useless waste of innocent lives. Those therefore who wish to make non-co-operation a success in the quickest possible time, will consider it their first duty to see that in their neighbourhood complete order is kept. . . . .



## GUJARAT NATIONAL UNIVERSITY ADDRESS

The following is an English version of Mr. Gandhi's address on the occasion of the inauguration of the Gujarat National University :

I would first request the ladies and gentlemen present here to bless the movement and wish it success not by mere words but by deed, by sending their sons and daughters to the institution. India has ever helped such institutions financially, progress is never stayed on account of lack of financial support. But I do believe that it is stayed for lack of men, teachers and organisers. It is only a bad workman that quarrels with his tools and the truest is he who gives the best with what he has. I would tell the Principal and the Professors that only one principle need guide them here. They are to teach lessons of freedom not by their scholarship but by their sterling character. They are to meet the warring forces of the Government with their divine peaceful forces. We have to nurse the seed of freedom into a full-grown tree of *Swaraj*. May God justify my faith in you! I know that I have not the scholarship which is expected in a Chancellor of a University. But I have my faith which has moved me to accept it. I am prepared to live and die for this work, and I accept this high office only because I know that the same feelings actuate you.

Now I turn to the students. I consider it a sin to blame them, because they are one mirror in which the present situation is so faithfully reflected. They are simple things and easy to read. If they lack in virtue the fault is not theirs but it is that of the parents, teachers and the king. How do I find fault with the king? *Yatha praja tatha raja* (as are the subjects so is the king) is equally true as *yatha raja tatha praja* (as is the king so are the subjects), for a king is a king so long

as his authority is respected. People are at fault and their drawbacks are mirrored in the students and hence we must try to reform parents, teachers and kings. Every home is a university and the parents are the teachers. The parents in India have at present foregone this sacred duty. We have not been able to estimate foreign culture at its proper value. How can we expect now to rise with that borrowed culture?

We inaugurate this University not as an educational institution but as a national one. We inaugurate it to inculcate character and courage in students and our fitness for *Swaraj* will be rated by this our success.

This is not the time for words but for deeds and I have called upon you to contribute your quota to the national sacrifice. Now I address myself to the students. I do not regard them as mere students exempt from any responsibility. I regard the students who have joined this institution as examples to others and hence fulfilling the conditions of teachers to some extent. The Mahavidyalaya is founded on them; without them it would have been an impossibility. They share its responsibility and unless they realise this, all the efforts of the teachers will not bear fruits expected of them. They are to fully realise this when they have left their colleges and joined this. May God pour into them the strength to discharge their duties during this grim struggle however long it lasts!

#### BIRTH-PLACE OF "N. C. O."

This strength of conviction, and not the strength in number, would make this institution a success and an ideal to the rest of India. It shall be so not because of the wealth of Gujarat or its learning but because it is the birth-place of non-co-operation. The ground was first

prepared in Guzarat and the seed sown. It is Guzarat that has snffered the hirth-pangs and it is Guzarat that has reared up the movement. It is not vanity that speaks in me. I do not mean to say that I am 'the author of all this. I have simply been a *Rishi*, a *Seer*, if a Bania-like myself can be one. I have simply given the idea and it is worked out by my colleagues. Their faith is of a superior type. I have seen it by experience as directly as I see the trees opposite, that India is to rise by non-violent non-co-operation and even the gods cannot convince me otherwise. But my colleagues have realised this by imagination, by reasoning, by faith. Individual experience is not the only factor in an action. Faith and imagination do play their part.

My colleagues have grounded the weapon and its effect cannot be fully realised at this moment as it will be six months hence. But its corporate symbol is this Mahavidyalaya. The Chancellor, the teachers and the students form the component parts of the symbol. I am an autumnal leaf on the tree that might fall off at any moment, the teachers are the young sprouts that would last longer but fall off at their proper time but you, the students, are the branches that would put forth new leaves to replace the old ones. I request the students to have the same faith in teachers as they have in me. But if you find them lack in vitality, I would ask you to burn them in your fire of righteousness. Such is my prayer to God and that is my blessing to the students.

In conclusion, I pray to God and I wish you to join me in the prayer that this Mahavidyalaya help us to win the freedom that would turn not only this country but the world into a heaven.

## COURTS AND SCHOOLS

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Even before the special Congress, Mr. Gandhi had enunciated his scheme of non-co-operation and begun his agitation in the press and platform urging his countrymen to follow the various terms in his programme. In the *Young India*, in August 1920, Mr. Gandhi laid special stress on the need for boycotting courts and schools. He wrote :

The Non-Co-operation Committee has included in the first stage boycott of law courts by lawyers and of Government schools and colleges by parents or scholars as the case may be. I know that it is only my reputation as a worker and fighter which has saved me from an open charge of lunacy for having given the advice about boycott of courts and schools.

I venture however to claim some method about my madness. It does not require much reflection to see that it is through courts that a Government establishes its authority and it is through schools that it manufactures clerks and other employees. They are both healthy institutions when the Government in charge of them is on the whole just. They are death-traps when the Government is unjust.

### FIRST AS TO LAWYERS

No newspaper has combated my views on non-co-operation with so much pertinacity and ability as the *Allahabad Leader*. It has ridiculed my views on lawyers expressed in my booklet, "Indian Home Rule", written by me in 1908. I adhere to the views then expressed. And if I find time I hope to elaborate them in these columns. But I refrain from so doing for the time being as my special views have nothing to do with my advice on the

necessity of lawyers suspending practice. I submit that national non-co-operation requires suspension of their practice by lawyers. Perhaps no one co-operates with a Government more than lawyers through its law courts. Lawyers interpret laws to the people and thus support authority. It is for that reason that they are styled officers of the court. They may be called honorary office-holders. It is said that it is the lawyers who have put up the most stubborn fight against the Government. This is no doubt partly true. But that does not undo the mischief that is inherent in the profession. So when the nation wishes to paralyse the Government, that profession, if it wishes to help the nation to bend the Government to its will, must suspend practice. But say the critics, the Government will be too pleased if the pleaders and barristers fell into the trap laid by me. I do not believe it. What is true in ordinary times is not true in extraordinary times. In normal times the Government may resent fierce criticism of their manners and methods by lawyers, but in the face of fierce action they would be loath to part with a single lawyer's support through his practice in the courts.

Moreover, in my scheme, suspension does not mean stagnation. The lawyers are not to suspend practice and enjoy rest. They will be expected to induce their clients to boycott courts. They will improvise arbitration boards in order to settle disputes. A nation that is bent on forcing justice from an unwilling Government, has little time for engaging in mutual quarrels. This truth the lawyers will be expected to bring home to their clients. The readers may not know that many of the most noted lawyers of England suspended their work during the late War. The lawyers, then, upon temporarily leaving their profession,

became whole-time workers instead of being workers only during their recreation hours. Real politics are not a game. The late Mr. Gokhale used to deplore that we had not gone beyond treating politics as a pastime. We have no notion as to how much the country has lost by reason of amateurs having managed its battles with the serious-minded, trained and whole-time working bureaucracy.

The critics then argue that the lawyers will starve if they leave their profession. This cannot be said of the profession. They do at times suspend work for visiting Europe or otherwise. Of those who live from hand to mouth, if they are honest men, each local Khilafat Committee can pay them an honorarium against full time service.

Lastly, for Mahomedan lawyers, it has been suggested that if they stop their practice, Hindus will take it up. I am hoping Hindus will at least show the negative courage of not touching their Muslim brethren's clients even if they do not suspend their own practice. But I am sure no religiously minded Mussulman will be found to say that they can carry on the fight only if the Hindn stand side by side with them in sacrifice. If the Hindus do as they must, it will be to their honour and for the common good of both. But the Mussulmans must go forward whether the Hindus join them or not. If it is a matter of life and death with them, they must not count the cost. No cost is too heavy for the preservation of one's honour, especially religious honour. Only they will sacrifice who cannot abstain. Forced sacrifice is no sacrifice. It will not last. A movement lacks sincerity when it is supported by unwilling workers under pressure. The Khilafat movement will become an irresistible force when every Mussulman treats the peace terms as an individual wrong. No man waits for others' help or sacrifice in

matters of private personal wrong. He seeks help no doubt, but his battle against the wrong goes on whether he gains help or not. If he has justice on his side, the divine law is that he does get help. God is the help of the helpless. When the Pandava brothers were unable to help Draupadi, God came to the rescue and saved her honour. The Prophet was helped by God when he seemed to be forsaken by men.

#### NOW FOR THE SCHOOLS

I feel that if we have not the courage to suspend the education of our children, we do not deserve to win the battle.

The first stage includes renunciation of honours or favours. As a matter of fact no Government bestows favours without taking more than the favours are worth. It would be a bad and extravagant Government which threw away its favours. In a Government broad-based upon a people's will, we give our lives to secure a trinket which is a symbol of service. Under an unjust Government which defies a people's will, rich *jagirs* become a sign of servitude and dishonour. Thus considered, the schools must be given up without a moment's thought.

For me the whole scheme of non-co-operation is among other things a test of the intensity and extent of our feeling. Are we genuine? Are we prepared to suffer? It has been said that we may not expect much response from title-holders, for they have never taken part in national affairs and have bought their honours at too great a price easily to sacrifice them. I make a present of the argument to the objectors and ask: What about the parents of school children and the grown up college students? They have no such intimate connection with the

Government as the title-holders. Do they or do they not feel enough to enable them to sacrifice the schooling ?

But I contend that there is no sacrifice involved in emptying the schools. We must be specially unfit for non-co-operation if we are so helpless as to be unable to manage our own education in total independence of the Government. Every village should manage the education of its own children. I would not depend upon Government aid. If there is a real awakening the schooling need not be interrupted for a single day. The very school-masters who are now conducting Government schools, if they are good enough to resign their office, could take charge of national schools and teach our children the things they need and not make of the majority of them indifferent clerks. I do look to the Aligarh College to give the lead in this matter. The moral effect created by the emptying of our Madrassas will be tremendous. I doubt not that the Hindu parents and scholars would not fail to copy their Mussulman brethren.

Indeed, what could be grander education than that the parents and scholars should put religious sentiment before a knowledge of letters ? If therefore no arrangement could be immediately made for the literary instruction of youths who might be withdrawn, it would be most profitable training for them to be able to work as volunteers for the cause which may necessitate their withdrawal from Government schools. For as in the case of the lawyers so in the case of boys, my notion of withdrawal does not mean an indolent life. The withdrawing boys will, each according to his worth, be expected to take their share in the agitation.

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## SPEECH AT MADRAS

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Addressing a huge concourse of people of all classes numbering over 50,000 assembled on the Beach opposite to the Presidency College, Madras, on the 12th August 1920, Mr. Gandhi outlined his Non-Co-operation scheme and sketched the programme of work before the country. He began with a reference to the death of Lokamanya Tilak and proceeded:

### NEED FOR NON-CO-OPERATION

What is this non-co-operation" about which you have heard much, and why do we want to offer this non-co-operation? I wish to go for the time being into the why. There are two things before this country: the first and the foremost is the Khilafat question. On this the heart of the Mussulmans of India has become lacerated. British pledges, given after the greatest deliberation by the Prime Minister of England in the name of the English nation, have been dragged into the mire. The promises given to Moslem India, on the strength of which the consideration that was accepted by the British nation was exacted, have been broken and the great religion of Islam has been placed in danger. The Mussulmans hold—and I venture to think they rightly hold—that so long as British promises remain unfulfilled so long is it impossible for them to tender whole-hearted fealty and loyalty to the British connection; and if it is to be a choice for a devout Mussulman between loyalty to the British connection and loyalty to his Code and Prophet, he will not require a second to make his choice—and he has declared his choice. The Mussulmans say frankly, openly and honourably to the whole world that if the British Ministers and the British nation do not fulfil the

pledges given to them and do not wish to regard with respect the sentiments of 70 millions of the inhabitants of India who profess the faith of Islam, it will be impossible for them to retain Islamic loyalty. It is a question then for the rest of the Indian population to consider whether they want to perform a neighbourly duty by their Mussulman countrymen and if they do, they have an opportunity of a lifetime which will not occur for another hundred years, to show their goodwill, fellowship and friendship and to prove what they have been saying for all these long years that the Mussulman is the brother of the Hindu. If the Hindu regards that before the connection with the British nation comes his natural connection with his Moslem brother, then I say to you that if you find that the Moslem claim is just, that it is based upon real sentiment, and that at its background is this great religious feeling, you cannot do otherwise than help the Mussulmans through and through so long as their cause remains just and the means for attaining the end remains equally just, honourable and free from harm to India. These are the plain conditions which the Indian Mussulmans have accepted and it was when they saw that they could accept the proffered aid of the Hindus that they could always justify the cause and the means before the whole world that they decided to accept the proffered hand of fellowship. It is then for Hindus and Mussulmans to offer a united front to the whole of the Christian powers of Europe and tell them that weak as India is, India has still got the capacity of preserving her self-respect, she still knows how to die for her religion and for her self-respect.

That is the Khilafat in a nut-shell ; but you have also got the Punjab. The Punjab has wounded the heart

of India as no other question has for the past century. I do not exclude from my calculation the Mutiny of 1857. Whatever hardships India had to suffer during the Mutiny, the insult that was attempted to be offered to her during the passage of the Rowlatt legislation, and that which was offered after its passage, were unparalleled in Indian history. It is because you want justice from the British nation in connection with the Punjab atrocities, you have to devise ways and means as to how you can get this justice. The House of Commons, the House of Lords, Mr. Montagu, the Viceroy of India, every one of them knows what the feeling of India is on this Khilafat question and on that of the Punjab; the debates in both the Houses of Parliament, the action of Mr. Montagu and that of the Viceroy have demonstrated to you completely that they are not willing to give the justice which is India's due and which she demands. I suggest that our leaders have got to find a way out of this great difficulty and unless we have made ourselves even with the British rulers in India, and unless we have gained a measure of self-respect at the hands of the British rulers in India, no connection and no friendly intercourse is possible between them and ourselves. I therefore venture to suggest this beautiful unanswerable method of non-co-operation.

#### IS IT UNCONSTITUTIONAL?

I have been told that non-co-operation is unconstitutional. I venture to deny that it is unconstitutional. On the contrary I hold that non-co-operation is a just and religious doctrine; it is the inherent right of every human being and it is perfectly constitutional. A great lover of the British Empire has said that under the British Constitution even a successful rebellion is perfectly

constitutional and he quotes historical instances which I cannot deny in support of his claim. I do not claim any constitutionality for a rebellion successful or otherwise so long as that rebellion means in the ordinary sense of the term what it does mean, namely, wresting justice by violent means. On the contrary I have said it repeatedly to my countrymen that violence, whatever end it may serve in Europe, will never serve us in India. My brother and friend Shaukat Ali believes in methods of violence; and if it was in his power to draw the sword against the British Empire, I know that he has got the courage of a man and he has got also the wisdom to see that he should offer that battle to the British Empire. But because he recognises as a true soldier that means of violence are not open to India, he sides with me accepting my humble assistance and pledges his word that so long as I am with him and so long as he believes in the doctrine so long will he not harbour even the idea of violence against any single Englishman or any single man on earth. I am here to tell you that he has been as true as his word and has kept it religiously. I am here to bear witness that he has been following out this plan of non-violent non-co-operation to the very letter and I am asking India to follow this non-violent non-co-operation. I tell you that there is not a better soldier living in our ranks in British India than Shaukat Ali. When the time for the drawing of the sword comes, if it ever comes, you will find him drawing that sword and you will find me retiring to the jungles of Hindustan. As soon as India accepts the doctrine of the sword, my life as an Indian is finished. It is because I believe in a mission special to India, and it is because I believe that the ancients of India, after centuries of experience, have found out

that the true thing for any human being on earth is not justice based on violence but justice based on sacrifice of self, justice based on *yagna* and *kurbani*—I cling to that doctrine and I shall cling to it for ever—it is for that reason I tell you that whilst my friend believes also in the doctrine of violence and has adopted the doctrine of non-violence as a weapon of the weak, I believe in the doctrine of non-violence as a weapon of the strongest. I believe that a man is the strongest soldier for daring to die unarmed with his breast bare before the enemy. So much for the non-violent part of non-co-operation. I therefore venture to suggest to my learned countrymen that so long as the doctrine of non-co-operation remains non-violent so long there is nothing unconstitutional in the doctrine.

I ask further: Is it unconstitutional for me to say to the British Government: I refuse to serve you? Is it unconstitutional for our worthy chairman to return with every respect all the titles that he has ever held from the Government? Is it unconstitutional for any parent to withdraw his children from a Government or aided school? Is it unconstitutional for a lawyer to say: I shall no longer support the arm of the law so long as that arm of law is used not to raise me but to debase me? Is it unconstitutional for a civil servant or for a judge to say: I refuse to serve a Government which does not wish to respect the wishes of the whole people? I ask: Is it unconstitutional for a policeman or for a soldier to tender his resignation when he knows that he is called to serve a Government which traduces its own countrymen? Is it unconstitutional for me to go to the *krishan* (to the agriculturist) and say to him: It is not wise for you to pay any taxes if these taxes are used by the Government not to raise you but to

weaken you? I hold and I venture to submit that there is nothing unconstitutional in it. What is more: I have done every one of these things in my life and nobody has questioned the constitutional character of it. I was in Kaira working in the midst of seven lakhs of agriculturists. They had all suspended the payment of taxes and the whole of India was at one with me. Nobody considered that it was unconstitutional. I submit that in the whole plan of non-co-operation there is nothing unconstitutional. But I do venture to suggest that it will be highly unconstitutional in the midst of this unconstitutional Government—in the midst of a nation which has built up its magnificent constitution—for the people of India to become weak and to crawl on their belly—it will be highly unconstitutional for the people of India to pocket every insult that is offered to them; it is highly unconstitutional for the 70 millions of Mussulmans of India to submit to a violent wrong done to their religion; it is highly unconstitutional for the whole of India to sit still and co-operate with an unjust Government which has trodden under its feet the honour of the Punjab; I say to my countrymen: So long as you have a sense of honour and so long as you wish to remain the descendants and defenders of the noble traditions that have been handed to you for generations after generations, it is unconstitutional for you not to non-co-operate and unconstitutional for you to co-operate with a Government which has become so unjust as our Government has become. I am not anti-English; I am not anti-British; I am not anti-any Government; but I am anti-untruth—anti-humbug and anti-injustice. So long as the Government spells injustice, it may regard me as its enemy, implacable enemy. I had hoped at the Congress at Amritsar—I am speaking God's truth before you—when I pleaded on bended

knees before some of you for co-operation with the Government, I had full hope that the British Ministers, who are wise as a rule, would placate the Mussulman sentiment, that they would do full justice in the matter of the Punjab atrocities, and therefore I said: Let us return goodwill to the hand of fellowship that has been extended to us which, I then believed, was extended to us through the Royal Proclamation. It was on that account that I pleaded for co-operation. But to-day that faith having gone and obliterated by the acts of the British Ministers, I am here to plead not for futile obstruction in the Legislative Council but for real substantial non-co-operation which would paralyse the mightiest Government on earth. That is what I stand for to-day. Until we have wrung justice and until we having wrung our self-respect from unwilling hands and from unwilling pens, there can be no co-operation. Our *Shastras* say and I say so with the greatest deference to all the greatest religious preceptors of India but without fear of contradiction that our *Shastras* teach us that there shall be no co-operation between injustice and justice, between an unjust man and a justice-loving man, between truth and untruth. Co-operation is a duty only so long as Government protects your honour, and non-co-operation is an equal duty when the Government, instead of protecting, robs you of your honour. That is the doctrine of non-co-operation.

#### NON-CO-OPERATION AND THE SPECIAL CONGRESS

I have been told that I should have waited for the declaration of the Special Congress which is the mouth-piece of the whole nation. I know that it is the mouth-piece of the whole nation. If it was for me, individual Gandhi, to wait, I would have waited for eternity. But I had in my hands a sacred trust. I was advising

my Mussulman countrymen and for the time being; I hold their honour in my hands. I dare not ask them to wait for any verdict but the verdict of their own conscience. Do you suppose that Mussulmans can eat their own words, can withdraw from the honourable position they have taken up? If perchance—and God forbid that it should happen—the Special Congress decides against them, I would still advise my countrymen, the Mussulmans, to stand single-handed and fight rather than yield to the attempted dishonour to their religion. It is therefore given to the Mussulmans to go to the Congress on bended knees and plead for support. But support or no support, it was not possible for them to wait for the Congress to give them the lead. They had to choose between futile violence, drawing of the naked sword and peaceful non-violent but effective non-co-operation, and they have made their choice. I venture further to say to you that if there is anybody of men who feel as I do, the sacred character of non-co-operation, it is for you and me not to wait for the Congress but to act and to make it impossible for the Congress to give any other verdict. After all what is the Congress? The Congress is the collected voice of individuals who form it, and if the individuals go to the Congress with a united voice, that will be the verdict you will gain from the Congress. But if we go to the Congress with no opinion because we have none or because we are afraid to express it, then naturally we await the verdict of the Congress. To those who are unable to make up their mind, I say, by all means wait. But for those who have seen the clear light as they see the lights in front of them, for them to wait is a sin. The Congress does not expect you to wait but it expects you to act so that the Congress can



gauge properly the national feeling. So much for the Congress.

#### BOYCOTT OF THE COUNCILS

Among the details of non-co-operation I have placed in the foremost rank the boycott of the councils. Friends have quarrelled with me for the use of the word boycott, because I have disapproved—as I disapprove even now—boycott of British goods or any goods for that matter. But there, boycott has its own meaning and here boycott has its own meaning. I not only do not disapprove but approve of the boycott of the councils that are going to be formed next year. And why do I do it? The people—the masses—require from us, the leaders, a clear lead. They do not want any equivocation from us. The suggestion that we should seek election and then refuse to take the oath of allegiance would only make the nation distrust the leaders. It is not a clear lead to the nation. So I say to you, my countrymen, not to fall into this trap. We shall sell our country by adopting the method of seeking election and then not taking the oath of allegiance. We may find it difficult and I frankly confess to you that I have not that trust in so many Indians making that declaration and standing by it. To-day I suggest to those who honestly hold the view, *viz.*, that we should seek election and then refuse to take the oath of allegiance—I suggest to them that they will fall into a trap which they are preparing for themselves and for the nation. That is my view. I hold that if we want to give the nation the clearest possible lead and if we want not to play with this great nation, we must make it clear to this nation that we cannot take any favours, no matter how great they may be, so long as those favours are accompanied by an injustice, a double wrong

done to India not yet redressed. The first indispensable thing before we can receive any favours from them is, that they should redress this double wrong. There is a Greek proverb which used to say : "Beware of the Greeks but especially beware of them when they bring gifts to you." To-day from those Ministers who are bent upon perpetuating the wrong to Islam and to the Punjab, I say we cannot accept gifts but we should be doubly careful lest we may not fall into the trap that they may have devised. I therefore suggest that we must not coquet with the councils and must not have anything whatsoever to do with them. I am told that if we, who represent the national sentiment, do not seek election, the Moderates who do not represent that sentiment will. I do not agree. I do not know what the Moderates represent and I do not know what the Nationalists represent. I know that there are good sheep and black sheep amongst the Moderates. I know that there are good sheep and black sheep amongst the Nationalists. I know that many Moderates hold honestly the view that it is a sin to resort to non-co-operation. I respectfully agree to differ from them. I do say to them also that they will fall into a trap which they will have devised if they seek election. But that does not affect my situation. If I feel in my heart of hearts that I ought not to go to the councils, I ought at least to abide by this decision and it does not matter if ninety-nine other countrymen seek election. That is the only way in which public work can be done and public opinion can be built. That is the only way in which reforms can be achieved and religion can be conserved. If it is a question of religious honour, whether I am one or among many, I must stand upon my doctrine. Even if I should die in the attempt, it is worth dying for

than that I should live and deny my own doctrine. I suggest that it will be wrong on the part of any one to seek election to these councils. If once we feel that we cannot co-operate with this Government, we have to commence from the top. We are the natural leaders of the people and we have acquired the right and the power to go to the nation and speak to it with the voice of non-co-operation. I therefore do suggest that it is inconsistent with non-co-operation to seek election to the councils on any terms whatsoever.

#### LAWYERS AND NON-CO-OPERATION

I have suggested another difficult matter, *viz.*, that the lawyers should suspend their practice. How should I do otherwise knowing so well how the Government had always been able to retain this power through the instrumentality of lawyers. It is perfectly true that it is the lawyers of to-day who are leading us, who are fighting the country's battles, but when it comes to a matter of action against the Government, when it comes to a matter of paralysing the activity of the Government, I know that the Government always looks to the lawyers, however fine fighters they may have been, to preserve their dignity and their self-respect. I therefore suggest to my lawyer friends that it is their duty to suspend their practice and to show to the Government that they will no longer retain their offices, because lawyers are considered to be honorary officers of the courts and therefore subject to their disciplinary jurisdiction. They must no longer retain these honorary offices if they want to withdraw co-operation from Government. But what will happen to law and order? We shall evolve law and order through the instrumentality of these very lawyers. We shall promote arbitration courts and dispense justice, pure, simple, home-made

justice, *swadeshi* justice to our countrymen. That is what suspension of practice means.

#### PARENTS AND NON-CO-OPERATION

I have suggested yet another difficulty—to withdraw our children from the Government schools and to ask collegiate students to withdraw from the college and to empty Government-aided schools. How could I do otherwise? I want to gauge the national sentiment. I want to know whether the Mussulmans feel deeply. If they feel deeply, they will understand in the twinkling of an eye that it is not right for them to receive schooling from a Government in which they have lost all faith; and which they do not trust at all. How can I, if I do not want to help this Government, receive any help from that Government. I think that the schools and colleges are factories for making clerks and Government servants. I would not help this great factory for manufacturing clerks and servants if I want to withdraw co-operation from that Government. Look at it from any point of view you like. It is not possible for you to send your children to the schools and still believe in the doctrine of non-co-operation.

#### THE DUTY OF TITLE-HOLDERS

I have gone further. I have suggested that our title-holders should give up their titles. How can they hold on to the titles and honours bestowed by this Government? They were at one time badges of honour when we believed that national honour was safe in their hands. But now they are no longer badges of honour but badges of dishonour and disgrace when we really believe that we cannot get justice from this Government. Every title-holder holds his title and honours as trustee for the nation and in this first step in the withdrawal of co-operation from the Government, they should surrender their titles without a

moment's consideration. I suggest to my Mahomedan countrymen that, if they fail in this primary duty they will certainly fail in non-co-operation unless the masses themselves reject the classes and take up non-co-operation in their own hands and are able to fight that battle, even as the men of the French Revolution were able to take the reins of Government in their own hands leaving aside the leaders and marched to the banner of victory. I want no revolution. I want ordered progress. I want no disordered order. I want no chaos. I want real order to be evolved out of this chaos which is misrepresented to me as order. If it is order established by a tyrant in order to get hold of the tyrannical reins of Government, I say that it is no order for me but it is disorder. I want to evolve justice out of this injustice. Therefore I suggest to you the passive non-co-operation. If we would only realise the secret of this peaceful and infallible doctrine, you will know and you will find that you will not want to use even an angry word when they lift the sword at you and you will not want even to lift your little finger, let alone a stick or a sword.

#### A SERVICE TO THE EMPIRE

You may consider that I have spoken these words in anger because I have considered the ways of this Government immoral, unjust, debasing and untruthful. I use these adjectives with the greatest deliberation. I have used them for my own true brother with whom I was engaged in a battle of non-co-operation for full 13 years and although the ashes cover the remains of my brother, I tell you that I used to tell him that he was unjust when his plans were based upon immoral foundation. I used to tell him that he did not stand for truth. There was no anger in me. I told him this home truth because I loved him.

In the same manner I tell the British people that I love them and that I want their association but I want that association on conditions well defined. I want my self-respect and I want my absolute equality with them. If I cannot gain that equality from the British people, I do not want that British connection. If I have to let the British people go and import temporary disorder and dislocation of national business, I will rather favour that disorder and dislocation than that I should have injustice from the hands of a great nation such as the British nation. You will find that by the time the whole chapter is closed that the successors of Mr. Montagu will give me the credit for having rendered the most distinguished service that I have yet rendered to the Empire, in having offered this non-co-operation and in having suggested the boycott, not of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, but of boycott of a visit engineered by the Government in order to tighten its hold on the national neck. I will not allow it even if I stand alone, if I cannot persuade this nation not to welcome that visit, but will boycott that visit with all the power at my command. It is for that reason I stand before you and implore you to offer this religious battle, but it is not a battle offered to you by a visionary or a saint. I deny being a visionary. I do not accept the claim of saintliness. I am of the earth, earthly, a common gardener man as much as any one of you, probably much more than you are. I am prone to as many weaknesses as you are. But I have seen the world. I have lived in the world with my eyes open. I have gone through the most fiery ordeals that have fallen to the lot of man. I have gone through this discipline. I have understood the secret of my own sacred Hinduism, I have learnt the lesson that non-co-operation is the duty not merely of the saint but it is the duty of

every ordinary citizen, who not knowing much, not caring to know much, but wants to perform his ordinary household functions. The people of Europe teach even their masses, the poor people, the doctrine of the sword. But the *Rishis* of India, those who have held the traditions of India, have preached to the masses of India the doctrine, not of the sword, not of violence but of suffering, of self-suffering. And unless you and I are prepared to go through this primary lesson, we are not ready even to offer the sword and that is the lesson my brother Shaukat Ali has imbibed to teach and that is why he to-day accepts my advice tendered to him in all prayerfulness and in all humility and says : "Long live non-co-operation." Please remember that even in England the little children were withdrawn from the schools, and colleges in Cambridge and Oxford were closed. Lawyers had left their desks and were fighting in the trenches. I do not present to you the trenches but I do ask you to go through the sacrifice that the men, women and the brave lads of England went through. Remember that you are offering battle to a nation which is saturated with the spirit of sacrifice whenever the occasion arises. Remember that the little band of Boers offered stubborn resistance to a mighty nation. But their lawyers had left their desks. Their mothers had withdrawn their children from the schools and colleges and the children had become the volunteers of the nation. I have seen them with these naked eyes of mine. I am asking my countrymen in India to follow no other gospel than the gospel of self-sacrifice which precedes every battle. Whether you belong to the school of violence or non-violence, you will still have to go through the fire of sacrifice and of discipline. May God grant you, may God grant our leaders the wisdom, the courage and the true knowledge to lead the nation to its cherished goal! May God grant the people of India the right path, the true vision and the ability and the courage to follow this path, difficult and yet easy, of sacrifice!

## SPEECH AT THE SPECIAL CONGRESS, CALCUTTA

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After a prolonged tour round the country addressing large masses of people on the non-co-operation programme, Mr. Gandhi reached Calcutta in the first week of September, 1930, to attend the Special Congress to which the country had been looking forward for a definite lead on the two issues, *viz.*, the Punjab and the Khilafat. Already Mr. Gandhi had prepared the large mass of those likely to attend the session to vote for his programme. But the leaders in different provinces were by no means convinced of the soundness of Mr. Gandhi's scheme. Lala Lajpat Rai, the President of the Session, and Mr. C. R. Das who subsequently became ardent followers of Mr. Gandhi, stood out against his programme and assisted by Mr. B. C. Pal, opposed Mr. Gandhi. But Mr. Gandhi carried the day and his lead was followed in the Moslem League and the Khilafat Conference as well. The resolution ran as follows:

"In view of the fact that on the Khilafat question both the Indian and Imperial Governments have signally failed in their duty towards the Mussulmans of India, and the Prime Minister has deliberately broken his pledged word given to them and that it is the duty of every non-Moslem Indian in every legitimate manner to assist his Mussulman brother in this attempt to remove the religious calamity that has overtaken him:

And in view of the fact that in the matter of the events of April 1919, both the said Governments have grossly neglected or failed to protect the innocent people of the Punjab and punish officers guilty of unsoldierly and barbarous behaviour towards them and have exonerated Sir Michael O'Dwyer who proved himself directly or indirectly responsible for most of the official crimes and callous to the sufferings of the people placed under his administration, and that the debate in the House of Lords betrayed a woeful lack of sympathy with the people of India and showed virtual support of the systematic terrorism and frightfulness adopted in the Punjab and that the latest Viceregal pronouncement is proof of entire absence of repentance in the matters of the Khilafat and the Punjab:

This Congress is of opinion that there can be no contentment in India without redress of the two aforementioned wrongs and that the only effectual means to vindicate national honour and to prevent a repetition of similar wrongs in future is the establishment of *Swarajya*. The Congress is further of opinion that there is no



course left open for the people of India but to approve of and adopt the policy of progressive non-violent non-co-operation until the said wrongs are righted and *Swarajya* is established.

And inasmuch as a beginning should be made by the classes who have hitherto moulded and represented opinion and inasmuch as Government consolidates its power through titles and honours bestowed on the people, through schools controlled by it, its law courts and its legislative councils, and inasmuch as it is desirable in the prosecution of the movement to take the minimum risk and to call for the least sacrifice compatible with the attainment of the desired object, the Congress earnestly advises:

(a) Surrender of titles and honorary offices and resignation from nominated seats in local bodies;

(b) refusal to attend Government Levees, Durbars and other official and semi-official functions held by Government officials or in their honour.

(c) gradual withdrawal of children from schools and colleges owned, aided or controlled by Government and in place of such schools and colleges establishment of national schools and colleges in the various provinces;

(d) gradual boycott of British courts by lawyers and litigants and establishment of private arbitration courts by their aid for the settlement of private disputes.

(e) refusal on the part of the military, clerical and labouring classes to offer themselves as recruits for service in Mesopotamia;

(f) withdrawal by candidates of their candidature for election to the Reformed Councils and refusal on the part of the voters to vote for any candidate who may, despite the Congress advice, offer himself for election;

(g) The boycott of foreign goods.

And inasmuch as non-co-operation has been conceived as a measure of discipline and self-sacrifice without which no nation can make real progress and inasmuch as an opportunity should be given in the very first stage of non-co-operation to every man, woman and child for such discipline and self-sacrifice, this Congress advises adoption of *Swadeshi* in piece-goods on a vast scale, and inasmuch as the existing mills of India with indigenous capital and control do not manufacture sufficient yarn and sufficient cloth for the requirements of the nation and are not likely to do so for a long time to come, this Congress advises immediate stimulation of further manufacture on a large scale by means of reviving hand-spinning in every home and hand-weaving on the part of the millions of weavers who have abandoned their ancient and honourable calling for want of encouragement."

In moving this resolution, Mr. Gandhi said:

I am aware, more than aware, of the grave responsibility that rests on my shoulders in being privileged to move this resolution before this great assembly. I am aware that my difficulties, as also yours, increase if you are able to adopt this resolution. I am also aware that the adoption of any resolution will mark a definite change in the policy which the country has hitherto adopted for the vindication of the rights that belong to it and its honour. I am aware that a large number of our leaders who have given the time and attention to the affairs of my Motherland which I have not been able to give, are ranged against me. They think it a duty to resist the policy of revolutionising the Government policy at any cost. Knowing this I stand before you in fear of God and a sense of duty to put this before you for your hearty acceptance.

I ask you to dismiss me, for the time being, from your consideration. I have been charged of saintliness and a desire for dictatorship. I venture to say that I do not stand before you either as a saint or a candidate for dictatorship. I stand before you to present to you the results of my many years' practical experience in non-co-operation. I deny the charge that it is a new thing in the country. It has been accepted at hundreds of meetings attended by thousands of men and has been placed in working order since the 1st of August by the Mussulmans, and many of the things in the programme are being enforced in a more or less intense form. I ask you again to dismiss personalities in the consideration of this important question and bring to bear patient and calm judgment on it. But a mere acceptance of the resolution does not end the work. Every individual has to enforce the items of the resolution in so far as they

apply to him. I beseech you to give me a patient hearing. I ask you neither to clap nor to hiss. . . You will not hiss out of the stage any single speaker. For non-co-operation is a measure of discipline and sacrifice and it demands patience and respect for opposite views. And unless we were able to evolve a spirit of mutual toleration for diametrically opposite views, non-co-operation is an impossibility. Non-co-operation in an angry atmosphere is an impossibility. I have learnt through bitter experience the one supreme lesson to conserve my anger, and as heat [conserved is transmuted into energy, even so our anger controlled can be transmuted into a power which can move the world. To those who have been attending the Congress as brothers in arms, I ask what can be better discipline than that which we should exercise between ourselves.

I have been told that I have been doing nothing but wreckage and that by bringing forward the resolution, I am breaking up the political life of the country. The Congress is not a party organisation. It ought to provide a platform for all shades of opinions, and a minority need not leave this organisation but may look forward to translate itself into a majority in course of time if its opinion commended itself to the country. Only let no man in the name of the Congress advocate a policy which has been condemned by the Congress. And if you condemn my policy, I shall not go away from the Congress but shall plead with them to convert the minority into a majority.

There are no two opinions as to the wrong done to the Khilafat. Mussulmans cannot remain as honourable men and follow their Prophet if they do not vindicate their honour at any cost. The Punjab has been cruelly, brutally treated and inasmuch as one man in the Punjab was

made to crawl on his belly, the whole of India crawled on her belly, and if we are worthy sons and daughters of India, we should be pledged to remove these wrongs. It is in order to remove these wrongs that the country is agitating itself. But we have not been able to hound the Government to our will. We cannot rest satisfied with a mere expression of angry feeling. You could not have heard a more passionate denunciation of the Punjab wrongs than in the pages of the Presidential address. If the Congress cannot wring justice from unwilling hands, how can it vindicate its existence and its honour? How can it do so if it cannot enforce clear repentance before receiving a single gift, however rich, from those blood-stained hands.

‘ I have therefore placed before you my scheme of non-co-operation to achieve this end and want you to reject any other scheme unless you have deliberately come to the conclusion that it is a better scheme than mine. If there is a sufficient response to my scheme, I make bold to reiterate my statement that you can gain *Swarajya* in the course of a year. Not the passing of the resolution will bring *Swarajya* but the enforcement of the resolution from day to day in a progressive manner due regard being had to the conditions in the country. There is another remedy before the country and that is drawing of the sword. If that was possible India would not have listened to the gospel of non-co-operation. I want to suggest to you that even if you want to arrest injustice by methods of violence, discipline and self-sacrifice are necessary. I have not known of a war gained by a rabble, but I have known of wars gained by disciplined armies and if you want to give battle to the British Government and to the combined power of Europe, we must train ourselves in discipline and

self-sacrifice. I confess I have become impatient. I have seen that we deserve *Swarajya* to-day, but we have not got the spirit of national sacrifice. We have evolved this spirit in domestic affairs and I have come to ask you to extend it to other affairs. I have been travelling from one end to the other end of the country to see whether the country has evolved the national spirit, whether at the altar of the nation it is ready to dedicate its riches, children, its all, if it is ready to make the initiatory sacrifice. Is the country ready? Are the title-holders ready to surrender their titles? Are parents ready to sacrifice the literary education of their children for the sake of the country? The schools and colleges are really a factory for turning out clerks for Government. If the parents are not ready for the sacrifice, if title-holders are not ready, *Swarajya* is very nearly an impossibility. . . Immediately the conquered country realised instinctively that any gift which might come to it is not for the benefit of the conquered but for the benefit of the conqueror, that moment it should reject every form of voluntary assistance to it. These are the fundamental essentials of success in the struggle for the independence for the country whether within the Empire or without the Empire. I hold a real substantial unity between Hindus and Mussulmans infinitely superior to the British connection, and if I had to make a choice between that unity and the British connection, I would have the first and reject the other. If I had to choose between the honour of the Punjab, anarchy, neglect of education, shutting out of all legislative activity, and British connection, I would choose the honour of the Punjab and all it meant, even anarchy, shutting out of all schools, etc., without the slightest hesitation.

If you have the same feeling burning in you as in me for the honour of Islam and the Punjab, then you will unreservedly accept my resolution.

I now come to the burning topic, *viz.*, the boycott of the councils. Sharpest differences of opinion existed regarding this and if the house has to divide on it, it must divide on one issue, *viz.*, whether *Swarajya* has to be gained through the councils or without the councils. If we utterly distrust the British Government and we know that they are utterly unrepentant, how can you believe that the councils will lead to *Swarajya* and not tighten the British hold on India?

I now come to *Swadeshi*. The boycott of foreign goods is included in the resolution. You have got here, I confess, an anomaly for which I am not originally responsible. But I have consented to it. I will not go into the history of how it found a place into the resolution of which the essence is discipline and self-sacrifice. *Swadeshi* means permanent boycott of foreign goods. It is therefore a matter of redundancy. But I have taken it in, because I could not reject it as a matter of conscience. I know, however, it is a physical impossibility. So long as we have to rely on the pins and needles—figurative and literal both—we cannot bring about a complete boycott of foreign goods. I do not hesitate to say this clause mars the musical harmony, if I may claim it without vanity, of the programme. I feel that those words do mar the symmetry of the programme. But I am not here for the symmetry of the programme as for its workability.

I again ask you not to be influenced by personality. Reject out of your consideration any service that I have done. Two things only I claim: Laborious industry, great thought behind my programme, and unflinching determination to bring it about. You may take only those things from me and bring them to bear on any programme that you adopt.

## SWARAJ IN ONE YEAR

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Since the Special Congress at Calcutta, Mr. Gandhi constantly referred to the possibility of obtaining *Swaraj* in one year. The period was extended to the end of December 1921 and Mr. Gandhi in his writings and speeches during this period spoke and wrote with the fervour of faith. Even in the last week of December he never showed any wavering of faith. In reply to his critics who could not believe in the practicability of achieving *Swaraj* inside the year, Mr. Gandhi wrote in *Young India* in October 1920:

Much laughter has been indulged in at my expense for having told the Congress audience at Calcutta that, if there was sufficient response to my programme of non-co-operation, *Swaraj* would be attained in one year. Some have ignored my condition and laughed because of the impossibility of getting *Swaraj* anyhow within one year. Others have spelt the "if" in capitals and suggested that if "ifs" were permissible in argument, any absurdity could be proved to be a possibility. My proposition, however, is based on a mathematical calculation. And I venture to say that true *Swaraj* is a practical impossibility without due fulfilment of my conditions. *Swaraj* means a state in which we can maintain our separate existence without the presence of the English. If it is to be a partnership, it must be a partnership at will. There can be no *Swaraj* without our feeling and being the equals of Englishmen. To-day we feel that we are dependent upon them for our internal and external security, for an armed peace between the Hindus and the Mussulmans, for our education and for the supply of daily wants, nay, even for the settlement of our religious squabbles. The Rajahs are dependent upon the British for their powers and the millionaires for their

millions. The British know our helplessness and Sir Thomas Holland cracks jokes quite legitimately at the expense of non-co-operationists. To get *Swaraj* then is to get rid of our helplessness. The problem is no doubt stupendous, even as it is for the fabled lion who, having been brought up in the company of goats, found it impossible to feel that he was a lion. As Tolstoy used to put it : Mankind often laboured under hypnotism. Under its spell continuously we feel the feeling of helplessness. The British themselves cannot be expected to help us out of it. On the contrary they din into our ears that we shall be fit to govern ourselves only by slow educative processes. The *Times* suggested that if we boycott the councils, we shall lose the opportunity of a training in *Swaraj*. I have no doubt that there are many who believe what the *Times* says. It even resorts to falsehood. It audaciously says that Lord Milner's Mission listened to the Egyptians only when they were ready to lift the boycott of the Egyptian Council. For me the only training in *Swaraj* we need is the ability to defend ourselves against the whole world and to live our natural life in perfect freedom even though it may be full of defects. Good government is no substitute for self-government. The Afghans have a bad government, but it is self-government. I envy them. The Japanese learnt the art through a sea of blood. And if we to-day had the power to drive out the English by superior brute force, we would be counted their superiors, and in spite of our inexperience in debating at the council table or in holding executive offices, we would be held fit to govern ourselves. For brute force is the only test the West has hitherto recognised. The Germans were defeated not because they were necessarily in the wrong but because the



Allied Powers were found to possess greater brute strength. In the end, therefore, India must either learn the art of war which the British will not teach her, or she must follow her own way of discipline and self-sacrifice through non-co-operation. It is as amazing as it is humiliating that less than one hundred thousand white men should be able to rule three hundred and fifteen million Indians. They do so somewhat undoubtedly by force but more by securing our co-operation in a thousand ways and making us more and more helpless and dependent on them as time goes forward. Let us not mistake reformed councils, more law courts and even governorships for real freedom or power. They are but subtler methods of emasculation. The British cannot rule us by mere force. And so they resort to all means, honourable and dishonourable in order to retain their hold on India. They want India's billions and they want India's man-power for their imperialistic greed. If we refuse to supply them with men and money, we achieve our goal, namely, *Swaraj*, equality, manliness.

The cup of our humiliation was filled during the closing scenes in the Viceregal Council. Mr. Sastri could not move his resolution on the Punjab. The Indian victims of Jallianwala received Rs. 1,250, the English victims of mob frenzy received lakhs. The officials, who were guilty of crimes against those whose servants they were, were reprimanded. And the councillors were satisfied. If India were powerful, India would not have stood this addition of insult to her injury.

I do not blame the British. If we were weak in numbers, as they are, we too would perhaps have resorted to the same methods as they are now employing. Terrorism and deception are weapons not of the strong but

of the weak. The British are weak in numbers, we are weak in spite of our numbers. The result is that each is dragging the other down. It is common experience that Englishmen lose in character after residence in India and that Indians lose in courage and manliness by contact with Englishmen. This process of weakening is good neither for us, two nations, nor for the world.

But if we Indians take care of ourselves, the English and the rest of the world would take care of themselves. Our contribution to the world's progress must therefore consist in setting our own house in order.

Training in arms for the present is out of the question. I go a step further and believe that India has a better mission for the world. It is within her power to show that she can achieve her destiny by pure self-sacrifice, i.e., self-purification. This can be done only by non-co-operation and non-co-operation is possible only when those who commenced to co-operate begin the process of withdrawal. If we can but free ourselves from the threefold *Maya* of Government-controlled schools, Government law courts and legislative councils and truly control our own education, regulate our disputes and be indifferent to their legislation, we are ready to govern ourselves and we are only then ready to ask the Government servants, whether civil or military, to resign and the tax-payers to suspend payment of taxes.

And is it such an impracticable proposition to expect parents to withdraw their children from schools and colleges and establish their own institutions, or to ask lawyers to suspend their practice and devote their whole time and attention to national service against payment, where necessary, of their maintenance or to ask candidates for councils not to enter councils and lend their passive or active assist-

ance to the legislative machinery through which all control is exercised? The movement of non-co-operation is nothing but an attempt to isolate the brute force of the British from all the trappings under which it is hidden and to show that brute force by itself cannot for one single moment hold India.

But I frankly confess that until the three conditions mentioned by me are fulfilled, there is no *Swaraj*. We may not go on taking our college degrees, taking thousands of rupees monthly from clients for cases which can be finished in five minutes and taking the keenest delight in wasting the national time on the council floor and still expect to gain national self-respect.

The last, though not the least, important part of the *Maya* still remains to be considered. That is *Swadeshi*. Had we not abandoned *Swadeshi*, we need not have been in the present fallen state. If we would get rid of the economic slavery, we must manufacture our own cloth and at the present moment only by hand-spinning and hand-weaving.

All this means discipline, self-denial, self-sacrifice, organising ability, confidence, and courage. If we show this in one year among the classes that to-day count and make public opinion, we certainly gain *Swaraj* within one year. If I am told that even we who lead have not these qualities in us, there certainly will never be *Swaraj* for India but then we shall have no right to blame the English for what they are doing. Our salvation and its time are solely dependent upon us.

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## TO EVERY ENGLISHMAN IN INDIA

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Mr. Gandhi wrote the following two open letters in the pages of his *Young India*. Like every one of his articles, they were widely reproduced in the press. The letters deal with all the topics connected with the non-co-operation movement. The first was written in October 1920 and the second in July 1921 :

### I

Dear Friend,—I wish that every Englishman will see this appeal and give thoughtful attention to it.

Let me introduce myself to you. In my humble opinion no Indian has co-operated with the British Government more than I have for an unbroken period of twenty-nine years of public life in the face of circumstances that might well have turned any other man into a rebel. I ask you to believe me when I tell you that my co-operation was not based on the fear of the punishments provided by your laws or any other selfish motives. It was free and voluntary co-operation based on the belief that the sum-total of the British Government was for the benefit of India. I put my life in peril four times for the sake of the Empire—at the time of the Boer War when I was in charge of the Ambulance Corps whose work was mentioned in General Buller's despatches, at the time of the Zulu revolt in Natal when I was in charge of a similar corps, at the time of the commencement of the late War when I raised an Ambulance Corps and as a result of the strenuous training had a severe attack of pleurisy and, lastly, in fulfilment of my promise to Lord Chelmsford at the War Conference in Delhi, I threw myself in such an active recruiting campaign in Kaira District involving long and trying marches that I had an attack of

dysentery which proved almost fatal. I did all this in the full belief that acts such as mine must gain for my country an equal status in the Empire. So last December I pleaded hard for a trustful co-operation. I fully believed that Mr. Lloyd George would redeem his promise to the Mussulmans and that the revelations of the official atrocities in the Punjab would secure full reparation for the Punjabis. But the treachery of Mr. Lloyd George and its appreciation by you, and the condonation of the Punjab atrocities, have completely shattered my faith in the good intentions of the Government and the nation which is supporting it.

But though my faith in your good intentions is gone, I recognise your bravery and I know that what you will not yield to justice and reason, you will gladly yield to bravery.

See what this Empire means to India :

Exploitation of India's resources for the benefit of Great Britain.

An ever-increasing military expenditure and a civil service the most expensive in the world.

Extravagant working of every department in utter disregard of India's poverty.

Disarmament and consequent emasculation of a whole nation, lest an armed nation might imperil the lives of a handful of you in our midst.

Traffic in intoxicating liquors and drugs for the purpose of sustaining a top heavy administration.

Progressively representative legislation in order to suppress an ever-growing agitation, seeking to give expression to a nation's agony.

Degrading treatment of Indians residing in your Dominions, and

You have shown total disregard of our feelings by glorifying the Punjab administration and flouting the Mussulman sentiment.

I know you would not mind if we could fight and wrest the sceptre from your hands. You know that we are powerless to do that, for you have ensured our incapacity to fight in open and honourable battle. Bravery on the battlefield is thus impossible for us. Bravery of the soul still remains open to us. I know you will respond to that also. I am engaged in evoking that bravery. Non-co-operation means nothing less than training in self-sacrifice. Why should we co-operate with you when we know that, by your administration of this great country, we are being daily enslaved in an increasing degree. This response of the people to my appeal is not due to my personality. I would like you to dismiss me, and for that matter the Ali Brothers too, from your consideration. My personality will fail to evoke any response to anti-Muslim cry if I were foolish enough to raise it, as the magic name of the Ali Brothers would fail to inspire the Mussulmans with enthusiasm if they were madly to raise an anti-Hindu cry. People flock in their thousands to listen to us, because we to-day represent voice of a nation groaning under iron heels. The Ali Brothers were your friends as I was, and still am. My religion forbids me to bear any ill-will towards you. I would not raise my hand against you even if I had the power. I expect to conquer you only by my suffering. The Ali Brothers will certainly draw the sword if they could, in defence of their religion and their country. But they and I have made common cause with the people of India in their attempt to voice their feelings and to find a remedy for their distress.

You are in search of a remedy to suppress this rising ebullition of national feeling. I venture to suggest to you that the only way to suppress it is to remove the causes. You have yet the power. You can repent of the wrongs done to Indians. You can compel Mr. Lloyd George to redeem his promises. I assure you he has kept many escape doors. You can compel the Viceroy to retire in favour of a better one, you can revise your ideas about Sir Michael O'Dwyer and General Dyer. You can compel the Government to summon a conference of the recognised leaders of the people duly elected by them and representing all shades of opinion so as to devise means for granting *Swaraj* in accordance with the wishes of the people of India.

But this you cannot do unless you consider every Indian to be in reality your equal and brother. I ask for no patronage. I merely point out to you, as a friend, an honourable solution of a grave problem. The other solution, namely, repression, is open to you. I prophesy that it will fail. It has begun already. The Government has already imprisoned two brave men of Panipat for holding and expressing their opinions freely. Another is on his trial in Lahore for having expressed similar opinions. One in the Oudh District is already imprisoned. Another awaits judgment. You should know what is going on in your midst. Our propaganda is being carried on in anticipation of repression. I invite you respectfully to choose the better way and make common cause with the people of India whose salt you are eating. To seek to thwart their aspirations is disloyalty to the country.

I am,

Your faithful friend,

M. K. GANDHI.

## II

Dear Friend,—This is the second time I venture to address you. I know that most of you detest non-cooperation. But I would invite you to isolate two of my activities from the rest if you can give me credit for honesty.

I cannot prove my honesty if you do not feel it. Some of my Indian friends charge me with camouflage when I say we need not hate Englishmen whilst we may hate the system they have established. I am trying to show them that one may detest the wickedness of a brother without hating him. Jesus denounced the wickedness of the Scribes and the Pharisees, but he did not hate them. He did not enunciate this law of love for the man and hate for the evil in him for himself only, but he taught the doctrine for universal practice. Indeed, I find it in all the scriptures of the world.

I claim to be a fairly accurate student of human nature and vivisector of my own failings. I have discovered that man is superior to the system he propounds. And so I feel that you as an individual are infinitely better than the system you have evolved as a corporation. Each one of my countrymen in Amritsar on that fateful 10th of April was better than the crowd of which he was a member. He as a man would have declined to kill those innocent English bank managers. But in that crowd, many a man forgot himself. Hence it is that an Englishman in office is different from an Englishman outside. Similarly an Englishman in India is different from an Englishman in England. Here in India you belong to a system that is vile beyond description. It is possible therefore for me to condemn the system in the strongest terms without considering you to be bad and



without imputing bad motives to every Englishman. You are as much slaves of the system as we are. I want you therefore, to reciprocate and not impute to me motives which you cannot read in the written word. I give you the whole of my motive when I tell you that I am impatient to end or mend a system which has made India subservient to a handful of you and which has made Englishmen feel secure only in the shadow of the forts and the guns that obtrude themselves on one's notice in India. It is a degrading spectacle for you and for us. Our corporate life is based on mutual distrust and fear. This, you will admit, is unmanly. A system that is responsible for such a state of things is necessarily satanic. You should be able to live in India as an integral part of its people and not always as foreign exploiters. One thousand Indian lives against one English life is a doctrine of dark despair and yet believe me, it was enunciated in 1919 by the highest of you in the land.

I almost feel tempted to invite you to join me in destroying a system that has dragged both you and us down. But I feel I cannot as yet do so. We have not shown ourselves earnest, self-sacrificing and self-restrained enough for that consummation.

But I do ask you to help us in the boycott of foreign cloth and in the anti-drink campaign.

The Lancashire cloth, as English historians have shown, was forced upon India and her own world-famed manufactures were deliberately and systematically ruined. India is therefore at the mercy not only of Lancashire but also of Japan, France, and America. Just see what this has meant to India. We send out of India every year sixty crores (more or less) of rupees for cloth. We grow enough cotton for our own cloth. Is it not madness to

send cotton outside India and have it manufactured into cloth there and shipped to us? Was it right to reduce India to such a helpless state?

A hundred and fifty years ago we manufactured all our cloth. Our women spun fine yarn in their own cottages and supplemented the earnings of their husbands. The village weavers wove that yarn. It was an indispensable part of national economy in a vast agricultural country like ours. It enabled us in a most natural manner to utilise our leisure. To-day our women have lost the cunning of their hands and the enforced idleness of millions has impoverished the land. Many weavers have become sweepers. Some have taken to the profession of hired soldiers. Half the race of artistic weavers has died out, and the other half is weaving imported foreign yarn for want of finer hand-spun yarn.

You will perhaps now understand what boycott of foreign cloth means to India. It is not devised as a punishment. If the Government were to-day to redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and consent to India attaining immediate *Swaraj*, the boycott movement must still continue. *Swaraj* means at least the power to conserve Indian industries that are vital to the economic existence of the nation and to prohibit such imports as may interfere with such existence. Agriculture and hand-spinning are the two lungs of the national body. They must be protected against consumption at any cost.

This matter does not admit of any waiting. The interests of the foreign manufacturers and the Indian importers cannot be considered when the whole nation is starving for want of a large productive occupation ancillary to agriculture.

You will not mistake this for a movement of general boycott of foreign goods. India does not wish to shut herself out of international commerce. Things other than cloth which can be better made outside India, she must gratefully receive upon terms advantageous to the contracting parties. Nothing can be forced upon her. But I do not wish to peep into the future. I am certainly hoping that before long it would be possible for India to co-operate with England on equal terms. Then will be the time for examining trade relations. For the time being, I bespeak your help in bringing about a boycott of foreign cloth.

Of similar and equal importance is the campaign against drink. The liquor shops are an insufferable curse imposed upon society. There never was so much awakening among the people as now upon this question. I admit that here, it is the Indian Ministers who can help more than you can. But I would like you to speak out your mind clearly on the question. Under every system of Government, total prohibition so far as I can see will be insisted upon by the nation. You can assist the growth of the ever-rising agitation by throwing in the weight of your influence on the side of the nation.

I am,  
Your faithful friend,  
M. K. GANDHI.

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## THE CREED OF THE CONGRESS

Mr. Gandhi, in moving his resolution on the Creed of the Congress at the Nagpur Session in December 1920, said:

The resolution which I have the honour to move is as follows: "The object of the Indian National Congress is the attainment of *Swarajya* by the people of India by all legitimate and peaceful means."

There are only two kinds of objections so far as I understand that will be advanced from this platform. One is, that we may not to-day think of dissolving the British connection. What I say is, that it is derogatory to national dignity to think of the permanence of British connection at any cost. We are labouring under a grievous wrong which it is the personal duty of every Indian to get redressed. The British Government not only refuses to redress the wrong, but it refuses to acknowledge its mistake and so long as it retains its attitude, it is not possible for us to say all that we want to be or all that we want to get, retaining British connection. No matter what difficulties be in our path, we must make the clearest possible declaration to the world and to the whole of India that we may not possibly have British connection if the British people will not do this elementary justice. I do not for one moment suggest that we want to end the connection at all costs unconditionally. If the British connection is for the advancement of India, we do not want to destroy it. But if it is inconsistent with our national self-respect, then it is our bounden duty to destroy it. There is room in this resolution for both—those who believe that by retaining British connection, we can purify ourselves and purify British people, and those who have no belief. As for instance, take the extreme case of Mr. Andrews. He says all hope for India is gone for keeping the British connection. He

says there must be complete severance—complete independence. There is room enough in this creed for a man like Mr. Andrews also. Take another illustration, a man like myself or my brother Shaukat Ali. There is certainly no room for us if we have eternally to subscribe to the doctrine; whether these wrongs are redressed or not, we shall have to evolve ourselves within the British Empire; there is no room for me in that creed. Therefore this creed is elastic enough to take in both shades of opinions and the British people will have to beware that if they do not want to do justice, it will be the bounden duty of every Indian to destroy the Empire.

I want just now to wind up my remarks with a personal appeal, drawing your attention to an object-lesson that was presented in the Bengal camp yesterday. If you want *Swaraj*, you have got a demonstration of how to get *Swaraj*. There was a little bit of skirmish, a little bit of squabble, and a little bit of difference in the Bengal camp, as there will always be differences so long as the world lasts. I have known differences between husband and wife, because I am still a husband; I have noticed differences between parents and children, because I am still a father of four boys, and they are all strong enough to destroy their father so far as bodily struggle is concerned; I possess that varied experience of husband and parent; I know that we shall always have squabbles, we shall always have differences but the lesson that I want to draw your attention to is, that I had the honour and privilege of addressing both the parties. They gave me their undivided attention and what is more they showed their attachment, their affection and their fellowship for me by accepting the humble advice that I had the honour of tendering to them, and I told them I am not here

to distribute justice that can be awarded only through our worthy President. But I ask you not to go to the President; you need not worry him. If you are strong, if you are brave, if you are intent upon getting *Swaraj*, and if you really want to revise the creed, then you will bottle up your rage, you will bottle up all the feelings of injustice that may rankle in your hearts and forget these things here under this very roof and I told them to forget their differences, to forget the wrongs. I don't want to tell you or go into the history of that incident. . . . .

I only wanted my Bengali friends and all the other friends who have come to this great assembly with a fixed determination to seek nothing but the settlement of their country, to seek nothing but the advancement of their respective rights, to seek nothing but the conservation of the national honour. I appeal to every one of you to copy the example set by those who felt aggrieved and who felt that their heads were broken. I know, before we have done with this great battle on which we have embarked at the Special Sessions of the Congress, we have to go probably, possibly, through a sea of blood, but let it not be said of us or any one of us that we are guilty of shedding blood, but let it be said by generations yet to be born that we suffered, that we shed not somebody's blood but our own, and so I have no hesitation in saying that I do not want to show much sympathy for those who had their heads broken or who were said to be even in danger of losing their lives. What does it matter? It is much better to die at the hands, at least, of our countrymen. What is there to revenge ourselves about or upon. So I ask every one of you that if at any time there is blood-boiling within you against some fellow-countrymen of yours, even though he may be in the employ of Government, even though he may

be in the Secret Service, you will take care not to be offended and not to return blow for blow. Understand that the very moment you return the blow from the detective, your cause is lost. This is your non-violent campaign. And so I ask every one of you not to retaliate but to bottle up all your rage, to dismiss your rage from you and you will rise braver men.

Therefore I appeal to those who feel aggrieved to feel that they have done the right thing in forgetting it and if they have not forgotten, I ask them to try to forget the thing; and that is the object-lesson to which I wanted to draw your attention if you want to carry this resolution. Do not carry this resolution only by an acclamation for this resolution, but I want you to accompany the carrying out of this resolution with a faith and resolve which nothing on earth can move. That you are intent upon getting *Swaraj* at the earliest possible moment and that you are intent upon getting *Swaraj* by means that are legitimate, that are honourable and by means that are non-violent, that are peaceful, you have resolved upon so far you can say to-day. We cannot give battle to this Government by means of steel, but we can give battle by exercising what I have so often called soul force and soul force is not the prerogative of one man or a *sanyasi* or even a so-called saint. Soul force is the prerogative of every human being, female or male, and therefore I ask my countrymen if they want to accept this resolution, to accept it with that firm determination and to understand that it is inaugurated under such good and favourable auspices as I have described to you.

## APPEAL TO YOUNG BENGAL

Soon after the Congress, Mr. Gandhi and the Ali Brothers made an extensive tour of the country appealing to the students to give up their schools and colleges and join the ranks of non-co-operators. At Aligarh and Benares great efforts were made to call away the students from the Muslim and Hindu Universities if they could not nationalise them. They were not quite successful though a few joined the Congress, but in Bengal, at the instance of Messrs. C. M. Das and Jitendralal Banerjee, a large number of students flocked to their standard and deserted the schools. It was such appeals as the following that enthused the youth of Bengal who created a profound sensation by throwing themselves in their thousands at the steps of the Calcutta University Hall, that the few who did attend the examination had to do so by walking over their bodies. Mr. Gandhi later reproved such obstructive methods but he wrote this appeal early in January 1921 :

Dear Young Friends,—I have just read an account of your response to the Nation's call. It does credit to you and to Bengal. I had expected no less. I certainly expect still more. Bengal has great intelligence. It has a greater heart, it has more than its share of the spiritual heritage for which our country is specially noted. You have more imagination, more faith and more emotion than the rest of India. You have falsified the calumny of cowardice on more occasions than one. There is, therefore, no reason why Bengal should not lead now as it has done before now.

You have taken the step, you will not recede. You had ample time to think. You have paused, you have considered. You held the Congress that delivered to the Nation the message of Non-Co-operation, *i.e.*, of self-purification, self-sacrifice, courage, and hope. The Nagpur Congress ratified, clarified, and amplified the first declaration. It was re-delivered in the midst of strife, doubt, and disunion. It was re-delivered in the midst of joy, acclamation, and practically perfect unanimity. It was open to you to refuse, or to hesitate, or to respond.



You have chosen the better, though, from a wordly-wise standpoint, less cautious way. You dare not go back without hurting yourselves and the cause.

But for the evil spell that the existing system of Government and, most of all, this Western education has cast upon us, the question will not be considered as open to argument. Can the brave Arabs retain their independence and yet be schooled under the aegis of those who would hold them under bondage? They will laugh at a person who dared to ask them to go to schools that may be established by their invaders. Is the case different or if it is different, is it not stronger in our case when we are called upon to give up schools conducted under the aegis of a Government which, rightly or wrongly, we seek to bend to our will or destroy?

We cannot get *Swaraj* if not one class in the country is prepared to work and sacrifice for it. The Government will yield not to the logic of words. It knows no logic but that of brave and true deeds.

Bravery of the sword they know. And they have made themselves proof against its use by us. Many of them will welcome violence on our part. They are unconquerable in the art of meeting and suppressing violence. We propose, therefore, to sterilize their power of inflicting violence by our non-violence. Violence dies when it ceases to evoke response from its object. Non-violence is the corner-stone of the edifice of Non-Co-operation. You will, therefore, not be hasty or over-zealous in your dealings with those who may not see eye to eye with you. Intolerance is a species of violence and therefore against our creed. Non-violent Non-Co-operation is an object-lesson in democracy. The moment we are able to ensure non-violence, even under circumstances the most provoking

that moment we have achieved our end, because that is the moment when we can offer complete Non-Co-operation. . . . .

Non-Co-operation deals first with those sensitive classes upon whom the Government has acted so successfully and who have been lured into the trap consciously or unconsciously as the school-going youths have been.

When we come to think about it, the sacrifice required is infinitesimal for individuals because the whole is distributed among so many of us. For what is your sacrifice? To suspend your literary studies for one year or till *Swaraj* is established. If I could infect the whole of the student world with my faith, I know that suspension of studies need not extend even to a year.

And in the place of your suspended studies, I would urge you to study the methods of bringing about *Swaraj* as quietly as possible even within the year of grace. I present you with the SPINNING WHEEL and suggest to you that on it depends India's economic salvation.

But you are at liberty to reject it if you wish and go to the college that has been promised to you by Mr. Das. Most of your fellow-students in the National College at Gujarat have undertaken to give at least four hours to spinning every day. It is no sacrifice to learn a beautiful art and to be able to clothe the naked at the same time.

You have done your duty by withdrawing from Government colleges. I have only showed you the easiest and the most profitable way of devoting the time at your disposal.

May God give you strength and courage to sustain you in your determination !

Your well-wisher,  
M. K. GANDHI.

## OPEN LETTER TO THE DUKE OF CONNAUGHT

Mr. Gandhi addressed the following open letter to H. R. H. the Duke of Connaught in the first week of February, 1921:

Sir,—Your Royal Highness must have heard a great deal about Non-Co-operation, Non-Co-operationists and their methods and incidentally of me, its humble author. I fear that the information given Your Royal Highness must have been in its nature one-sided. I owe it to you, to my friends and myself that I should place before you what I conceive to be the scope of Non-Co-operation as followed not only by me but my closest associates such as Messrs. Shankat Ali and Mahomed Ali.

For me it is no joy and pleasure to be actively associated in the boycott of Your Royal Highness' visit. I have tendered loyal, voluntary assistance to Government for an unbroken period of nearly 30 years in the full belief that through that lay the path of freedom for my country. It was therefore no slight thing for me to suggest to my countrymen that we should take no part in welcoming Your Royal Highness. Not one among us has anything against you as an English gentleman. We hold your person as sacred as that of a dearest friend. I do not know any of my friends who would not guard it with his life if he found it in danger.

We are not at war with individual Englishmen. We seek not to destroy English life. We do desire to destroy the system that has emasculated our country in body, mind and soul. We are determined to battle with all our might against that in English nature which has made O'Dwyerism and Dyerism possible in the Punjab and has resulted in a wanton affront upon Islam, a faith professed by seven crores of your countrymen. We consider it inconsistent with our self-respect any longer to brook the spirit of

superiority and dominance which has systematically ignored and disregarded the sentiments of thirty crores of innocent people of India on many a vital matter. It is humiliating to us. It cannot be a matter of pride to you that thirty crores of Indians should live day in and day out in fear of their lives from one hundred thousand Englishmen and, therefore, be under subjection to them.

Your Royal Highness has come, not to end the system I described, but to sustain it by upholding its prestige. Your first pronouncement was a laudation of Lord Willingdon. I have the privilege of knowing him. I believe him to be an honest, amiable gentleman, who will not willingly hurt even a fly, but he certainly failed as a ruler. He allowed himself to be guided by those whose interest it was to support their power. He is not reading the mind of the Dravidian province. Here in Bengal you are issuing a certificate of merit to a Governor who is again from all I have heard an estimable gentleman, but he knows nothing of the heart of Bengal and its yearnings. Bengal is not Calcutta, Fort William and the palaces of Calcutta represent an insolent exploitation of the un murmuring and highly cultured peasantry of this fair province.

The Non-Co-operationists have come to the conclusion that they must not be deceived by the reforms that tinker with the problem of India's distress and humiliation, nor must they be impatient and angry. We must not in our impatient anger resort to stupid violence. We freely admit that we must take our due share of blame for the existing state. It is not so much British guns that are responsible for our subjection as our voluntary co-operation.

Our non-participation in a hearty welcome to Your Royal Highness is thus in no sense a demonstration against your high personage, but it is against the system you come

to uphold. I know individual Englishmen cannot, even if they will, alter the English nature all of a sudden. If we would be the equals of Englishmen, we must cast off fear. We must learn to be self-reliant and independent of schools, courts, protection and patronage of a Government we seek to end if it will not mend.

Hence this Non-violent Non-Co-operation. I know we have not all yet become non-violent in speech and deed, but the results so far achieved have, I assure Your Royal Highness, been amazing. The people have understood the secret and value of non-violence as they have never done before. He who will may see that this is a religious, purifying movement. We are leaving off drink. We are trying to rid India of the curse of untouchability. We are trying to throw off foreign tinsel splendour and by reverting to the spinning wheel reviving the ancient and poetic simplicity of life. We hope thereby to sterilise the existing harmful institutions.

I ask Your Royal Highness as an Englishman to study this movement and its possibilities for the Empire and the world. We are at war with nothing that is good in the world. In protecting Islam in the manner we are, we are protecting all religions ; in protecting the honour of India, we are protecting the honour of humanity. For our means are hurtful to none. We desire to live on terms of friendship with Englishmen, but that friendship must be friendship of equals both in theory and in practice, and we must continue to non-co-operate, *i.e.*, to purify ourselves till the goal is achieved. I ask Your Royal Highness, and through you every Englishman, to appreciate the view-point of Non-Co-operation.

I beg to remain,  
Your Royal Highness' faithful servant,  
M. K. GANDHI.

## SOCIAL BOYCOTT

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While rigorous in his campaign of non-co-operation and political boycott, Mr. Gandhi was punctilious in regard to anything in the nature of social boycott of Europeans or officials. With him the movement is one of self-purification and therefore there is no room in it for social boycott. He wrote in *Young India* in its issue of February 1921 :

Non-co-operation being a movement of purification is bringing to the surface all our weaknesses as also excesses of even our strong points. Social boycott is an age-old institution. It is coeval with caste. It is the one terrible sanction exercised with great effect. It is based upon the notion that a community is not bound to extend its hospitality or service to an excommunicated. It answered when every village was a self-contained unit and the occasions of recalcitrancy were rare. But when opinion is divided, as it is to-day, on the merits of non-co-operation, when its new application is having a trial, a summary use of social boycott in order to bend a minority to the will of the majority is a species of unpardonable violence. If persisted in, such boycott is bound to destroy the movement. Social boycott is applicable and effective when it is not felt as a punishment and accepted by the object of boycott as a measure of discipline. Moreover, social boycott to be admissible in a campaign of non-violence must never savour of inhumanity. It must be civilised. It must cause pain to the party using it, if it causes inconvenience to its object. Thus, depriving a man of the services of a medical man, as is reported to have been done in Jhansi, is an act of

inhumanity tantamount in the moral code to an attempt to murder. I see no difference in murdering a man and withdrawing medical aid from a man who is on the point of dying. Even the laws of war, I apprehend, require the giving of medical relief to the enemy in need of it. To deprive a man of the use of an only village well is notice to him to quit that village. Surely, non-co-operators have acquired no right to use that extreme pressure against those who do not see eye to eye with them. Impatience and intolerance will surely kill this great religious movement. We may not make people pure by compulsion. Much less may we compel them by violence to respect our opinion. It is utterly against the spirit of the democracy we want to cultivate.

There are no doubt serious difficulties in our way. The temptation to resort to social boycott is irresistible when a defendant, who submits to private arbitration, refuses to abide by its award. Yet it is easy to see that the application of social boycott is more than likely to arrest the splendid movement to settle disputes by arbitration which, apart from its use as weapon in the armoury of non-co-operation, is a movement fraught with great good to the country. People will take time before they accommodate themselves to private arbitration. Its very simplicity and inexpensiveness will repel many people even as palates jaded by spicy foods are repelled by simple combinations. All awards will not always be above suspicion. We must therefore rely upon the intrinsic merits of the movement and the correctness of awards to make itself felt.

It is much to be desired if we can bring about a complete voluntary boycott of law courts. That one event can bring *Swaraj*. But it was never expected that we

would reach completion in any single item of non-co-operation. Public opinion has been so far developed as to recognise the Courts as signs not of our liberty but of our slavery. It has made it practically impossible for lawyers to practise their profession and be called popular leaders.

Non-co-operation has greatly demolished the prestige of law courts and to that extent of the Government. The disintegrating process is slowly but surely going on. Its velocity will suffer diminution if violent methods are adopted to hasten it. This Government of ours is armed to the teeth to meet and check forces of violence. It possesses nothing to check the mighty forces of non-violence. How can a handful of Englishmen resist a voluntary expression of opinion accompanied by the voluntary self-denial of thirty crores of people?

I hope, therefore, that non-co-operation workers will beware of the snares of social boycott. But the alternative to social boycott is certainly not social intercourse. A man who defies strong, clear public opinion on a vital matter is not entitled to social amenities and privileges. We may not take part in his social functions such as marriage feasts, we may not receive gifts from him. But we dare not deny social service. The latter is a duty. Attendance at dinner parties and the like is a privilege which it is optional to withhold or extend. But it would be wisdom to err on the right side and to exercise the weapon even in the limited sense described by me on rare and well-defined occasions. And in every case the user of the weapon will use it at his own risk. The use of it is not as yet in any form a duty. No one is entitled to its use if there is any danger of hurting the movement.



## THE MALEGAON INCIDENT

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Writing in *Young India*, Mr. Gandhi deplored the misbehaviour of non-co-operators who took part in the fray in Malegaon in the first week of May 1921:

If the facts reported in the Press are substantially correct, Malegaon non-co-operators have been false to their creed, their faith, and their country. They have put back the hands of the clock of progress. Non-violence is the rock on which the whole structure of non-co-operation is built. Take that away and every act of renunciation comes to naught, as artificial fruit is no more than a showy nothing. The murder of the men who were evidently doing their duty was, if the report is correct, deliberate. It was a cowardly attack. Certain men wilfully broke the law and invited punishment.

There could be no justification for resentment of such imprisonment. Those who commit violence of the Malegaon type, are the real co-operators with the Government. The latter will gladly lose a few officers if thereby they could kill non-co-operation. A few more such murders and we shall forfeit the sympathy of the masses. I am convinced that the people will not tolerate violence on our part. They are by nature peaceful and they have welcomed non-co-operation, because it is deliberately non-violent.

What must we do then? We must ceaselessly preach against violence alike in public and in private. We must not show any sympathy to the evil-doers. We must advise the men who have taken part in the murders, to surrender themselves if they are at all repentant.

The workers must be doubly careful in their talks. They must cease to talk of the evil of the Government and the officials whether European or Indian. Bluster must give place to the work of building up put before the nation by the Congress. We must be patient if there is no response to the demand for men, money and munitions. All police orders must be strictly obeyed. There should be no processions or *hartals* when known workers are prosecuted or imprisoned. If we welcome imprisonments of innocent men, as we must, we ought to cultivate innocence and congratulate ourselves when we are punished for holding opinions or for doing things that we consider it our duty to do, i.e., for spinning or collecting funds or getting names for the Congress register. There should be no civil disobedience. We have undertaken to stand the gravest provocation and remain non-violent. Let us be careful lest the hour of our triumph be, by our folly, the hour of our defeat and humiliation.

Reverting to the same subject in a subsequent issue of his Paper, Mr. Gandhi wrote :

I observe that there is a tendency to minimise the guilt of non-co-operators at Malegaon. No amount of provocation by the Sub-Inspector could possibly justify retaliation by the non-co-operators. I am not examining the case from the legal standpoint. I am concerned only with the non-co-operator's. He is bound under his oath not to retaliate even under the gravest provocation. . . .

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## THE SIMLA VISIT

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Soon after Lord Reading arrived in India, an interview was arranged by Pandit Malaviya between the new Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi. The interview which lasted many hours took place at Simla in May 1921. Much speculation was rife as to the result of the interview, and Mr. Gandhi explained the circumstances and the results of the interview in an article in *Young India* under the title "The Simla Visit";

Many are asking why I waited upon His Excellency the Viceroy. Some inquire why the author of non-co-operation should seek to see the Viceroy. All want to know the result of the interview. I like the rigorous scrutiny of the non-co-operators who, more than Caesar's wife, must be above suspicion. Non-co-operation is self-reliance. We want to establish *Swaraj*, not obtain it from others. Then why approach a Viceroy? This is all good so far as it goes. And I should be a bad representative of our cause if I went to anybody to ask for *Swaraj*. I have had the hardihood to say that *Swaraj* could not be granted even by God. We would have to earn it ourselves. *Swaraj* from its very nature is not in the giving of anybody.

But we want the world with us in our battle for freedom, we want the goodwill of everybody. Our cause, we claim, is based upon pure justice. There are certain things we want Englishmen to surrender. All these things need mutual discussion and mutual understanding. Non-co-operation is the most potent instrument for creating world opinion in our favour. So long as we protested and co-operated, the world did not understand us. The erstwhile lion of Bengal in his early days used

to relate the story of Englishmen, who asked him how many broken heads there were in India if things were really so bad as now represented them to be. That was the way John Bull understood best. The other question the world has undoubtedly been asking is: If things are really so bad, why do we co-operate with the Government in so pauperising and humiliating us? Now the world understands our attitude no matter how weakly we may enforce it in practice. The world is now curious to know what ails us. The Viceroy represents a big world. His Excellency wanted to know why I, with whom co-operation was an article of faith, had non-co-operated. There must be something wrong with the Government or me.

And so His Excellency mentioned to Pandit Malaviyaji and to Mr. Andrews that he would like to see me and hear my views. I went to see the Panditji because he was anxious to meet me. I hold him in such high regard that I would not think, even if he was well and I could help it, of letting him come to me. As it was, he was too weak to travel to me. It was my duty to go to him. And when I heard the purport of his conversation with His Excellency, I did not require any persuasion to prompt me to ask for an appointment if His Excellency wished to hear my views. I have devoted so much space to the reason for my seeking an appointment, for I wanted to make clear the limits and the meaning of non-co-operation.

It is directed not against men but against measures. It is not directed against the Governors but against the system they administer. The roots of non-co-operation lie not in hatred but in justice, if not in love. Gladstone used to draw a sharp distinction between bad actions and bad men. He was accused of discourtesy for using some very strong expressions about the arts of his

opponents. He put up the defence that he would have failed in his duty if he had not characterised their actions as they deserved to be, but he did not therefore mean to convey that his opponents deserved the epithets he had used about their acts. As a youth, when I heard this defence, I could not appreciate it. Now with years of experience and use, I understand how true it was. I have found some of the truest of my friends capable of indefensible acts. For me there are few truer men than V. S. Srinivas Shastriar, but his actions confound me. I do not think he loves me less because he believes that I am leading India down to the abyss.

And so I hope, this great movement of non-co-operation has made it clear to thousands, as it has to me, that whilst we may attack measures and systems, we may not, must not, attack men. Imperfect ourselves, we must be tender towards others and be slow to impute motives.

I therefore gladly seized the opportunity of waiting upon His Excellency and of assuring him that ours was a religious movement designed to purge Indian political life of corruption, deceit, terrorism and the incubus of white superiority.

The reader must not be too curious. He must not believe the so-called reports in the Press. The veil must remain drawn over the details of the conversation between the Viceroy and myself. But I may assure him that I explained as fully as I knew of the three claims—the Khilafat, the Punjab, and *Swaraj*—and gave him the genesis of non-co-operation. His Excellency heard me patiently, courteously, and attentively. He appeared to me to be anxious to do only the right thing. We had a full discussion of the burning topics as between man and man. We discussed the question of non-violence and it.

appeared to me to be common cause between us. Of that I may have to write more fully later.

But beyond saying that we were able to understand each other, I am unable to say that there was more in the interview. Some may think with me that a mutual understanding is in itself no small gain. Then, in that sense, the interview was a distinct success.

But at the end of all the long discussions, I am more than ever convinced that our salvation rests solely upon our own effort. His Excellency can only help or hinder. I am sanguine enough to think that he will help.

We must redouble our efforts to go through our programme. It is clearly as follows: (1) Removal of untouchability. (2) Removal of the drink curse. (3) Ceaseless introduction of the spinning wheel and the ceaseless production of Khaddar, leading to an almost complete boycott of foreign cloth. (4) Registration of Congress members; and (5) Collection of Tilak *Swaraj* Fund.

No fierce propaganda is necessary for solidifying Hindu-Muslim unity and producing a still more non-violent atmosphere.

I have put untouchability in the forefront, because I observe a certain remissness about it. Hindu non-co-operators may not be indifferent about it. We may be able to right the Khilafat wrong, but we can never reach *Swaraj* with the poison of untouchability corroding the Hindu part of the National body. *Swaraj* is a meaningless term if we desire to keep a fifth of India under perpetual subjection and deliberately deny to them the fruits of National culture. We are seeking the aid of God in this great purification movement, but we deny to the most deserving among His creatures the rights of

humanity. Inhuman ourselves, we may not plead before the Throne for deliverance from the inhumanity of others.

I put drink second as I feel that God has sent the movement to us unsought. The greatest storm rages round it. The drink movement is fraught with the greatest danger of violence. But so long as this Government persists in keeping the drink shops open so long must we persist in sleeplessly warning our erring countrymen against polluting their lips with drink.

The third place is assigned to the spinning wheel, though for me it is equally important with the first two. If we produce an effective boycott of foreign cloth during this year, we shall have shown cohesion, effort, concentration, earnestness, a spirit of Nationality that must enable us to establish *Swaraj*.

The fourth item, the membership of the Congress, is essential for the immense organisation required for dotting the country with the spinning wheels and for the manufacture and distribution of Khaddar, and for dispelling the fear that membership of the Congress may be regarded as a crime by the Government.

The fifth item, the Tilak *Swaraj* Fund, perpetuates the memory of the soul of *Swaraj* and supplies us with the sinews of war.

We are under promise to ourselves to collect one crore rupees, register one crore members and introduce twenty lakhs of spinning wheels in our homes by the 30th June. We shall postpone the attainment of our goal if we fail to carry out the programme evolved at a largely attended meeting of the All-India Congress Committee and arrived at after full consideration and debate.

## THE ALI BROTHERS' APOLOGY

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After the Gandhi-Reading interview, the Ali Brothers issued a statement at the instance of Mr. Gandhi—a statement in which they regretted their occasional lapse into excessive language and promised to refrain from writing or speaking in any manner likely to provoke violence. This definite result of the interview was claimed as a victory for the Government. Others claimed that it was a victory for Mr. Gandhi who explained that it was no apology or undertaking to the Government but a reassertion of the principle of non-violence to which the Ali Brothers had subscribed. It was a statement to the public irrespective of what the Government might or might not do with them. In answer to criticisms against his advice to the Brothers, Mr. Gandhi stoutly defended his action and praised the Brothers' attitude. He wrote in *Young India* of June 15, 1921 :

The Ali Brothers' apology still continues to tax people's minds. I continue to receive letters expostulating with me for having gone to the Viceroy at all. Some consider that I have bungled the whole affair, others blame the Brothers for having for once weakened and that in deference to me. I know that in a short while the storm will blow over. For, in spite of all I have heard and read, I feel that I did the right thing in responding to the Viceroy's wish to know my views. It would have been wrong on my part to have waited for a formal written invitation from His Excellency. I feel, too, that I gave the best advice possible in the interests of Islam and India, when I asked the Brothers to make the statement issued by them. The Ali Brothers have showed humility and courage of a high order in making the statement. They have shown that they are capable of sacrificing their pride and their all for the sake of their faith and country. They have served the cause by making the statement, as they would have injured it by declining to make it.



In spite of all that conviction in me, I am not surprised at the remonstrances I am receiving. They but show that the methods now being pursued are new, that the country will not surrender a tittle of its just demands, and for their satisfaction, it wishes to rely purely upon its own strength. . . . .

The apology of the Brothers is not made to the Government. It is addressed and tendered to friends who drew their attention to their speeches. It was certainly not given at the bidding of the Viceroy. I betray no confidence when I say that it was not even suggested by him. As soon as I saw the speeches, I stated in order to prove the *bona fides* of the Brothers and the entirely non-violent character of the movement that I would invite them to make a statement. There was no question of bargaining for their freedom. Having had my attention drawn to their speeches, I could not possibly allow them to go to gaol (if I could prevent it) on the ground of proved incitement to violence. I have given the same advice to all the accused and told them that if their speeches were violent, they should certainly express regret. A non-co-operator could not do otherwise. Had the Brothers been charged before a Court of Law, I would have advised them to apologise to the Court for some of the passages in their speeches which, in my opinion, were capable of being interpreted to mean incitement to violence. It is not enough for a non-co-operator not to mean violence; it is necessary that his speech must not be capable of a contrary interpretation by reasonable men. We must be above suspicion. The success of the movement depends upon its retaining its absolute purity. I, therefore, suggest to the writer and to those who may think like him that the whole principle of non-co-operation has not only

been given away as the writer contends, but its non-violent character has been completely vindicated by the Brothers' apology and the case therefore greatly strengthened.

What, however, is galling to the writer, is that whilst the Brothers have remained free, the lesser lights are in prison for having spoken less strongly than they.

That very fact shows the real character of non-co-operation. A non-co-operator may not bargain for personal safety. It was open to me to bargain for the liberty of the others. Then I would have given away the whole case for non-co-operation. I did not bargain even for the Brothers' liberty. I stated in the clearest possible terms that no matter what the Government did, it would be my duty on meeting the Brothers to advise them to make the statement to save their honour.

We must play the game whether the Government reciprocate or not. Indeed I, for one, do not expect the Government to play the game. It was, when I came to the conclusion that there was no honour about the Government, that I non-co-operated. Lord Reading may wish, does wish to do right and justice. But he will not be permitted to. If the Government were honorable, they would have set free all the prisoners as soon as they decided not to prosecute the Ali Brothers. If the Government were honorable, they would not have caught youths and put them in prison whilst they left Pandit Motilal Nehru the arch-offender free. If the Government were honorable, they would not countenance bogus Leagues of Peace. If the Government were honorable, they would have long ago repented for their heinous deeds, even as we have for every crime committed by our people in Amritsar, Kasur, Viramgam, Ahmedabad and recently in Malegaon. I entertain no false hopes or misgivings about

the Government. If the Government were to-morrow to arrest the Ali Brothers, I would still justify the apology. They have acted on the square and we must all do likewise. Indeed inasmuch as the Government are still arresting people for disaffection, they are arresting the Ali Brothers.

The writer is again not taking a correct view of non-co-operation in thinking that non-co-operators, who are in gaol, are less fortunate than we who are outside. For me, solitary confinement in a prison cell, without any breach on my part of the code of non-co-operation, or private or public morals, will be freedom. For me, the whole of India is a prison, even as the master's house is to his slave; a slave to be free must continuously rise against his slavery and be locked up in his master's cell for his rebellion. The cell-door is the door to freedom. I feel no pity for those who are suffering hardships in the gaols of the Government. Innocence under an evil Government must ever rejoice on the scaffold. It was the easiest thing for the Brothers to have rejected my advice and embraced the opportunity of joining their comrades in the gaols. I may inform the reader that when during the last stage of the South African struggle I was arrested, my wife and all friends heaved a sigh of relief. It was in the prisons of South Africa that I had leisure and peace from strife and struggle.

It is perhaps now clear why the non-co-operation prisoners may not make any statement to gain their freedom.

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## APPEAL TO THE WOMEN OF INDIA

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The following appeal addressed to the women of India appeared in *Young India* of August 11, 1921 :

Dear Sisters,—The All-India Congress Committee has come to a momentous decision in fixing the 30th September next as the final date for completing the boycott of foreign cloth begun by the sacrificial fire lit on the 31st July in Bombay in memory of Lokamanya Tilak. I was accorded the privilege of setting fire to the huge pile containing costly *saris* and other dresses which you have hitherto considered fine and beautiful. I feel that it was right and wise on the part of the sisters who gave their costly clothing. Its destruction was the most economical use you could have made of it, even as destruction of plague-infected articles is their most economical and best use. It was a necessary surgical operation designed to avert more serious complaints in the body politic.

The women of India have during the past twelve months worked wonders on behalf of the Motherland. You have silently worked away as angels of mercy. You have parted with your cash and your fine jewellery. You have wandered from house to house to make collections. Some of you have even assisted in picketing. Some of you who were used to fine dresses of variegated colours and had a number of changes during the day, have now adopted the white and spotless but heavy Khadi reminding *sadi* one of a woman's innate purity. You have done all this for the sake of India, for the sake of the Khilafat, for the sake of the Punjab. There

is no guilt about your word or work. Yours is the purest sacrifice untainted by anger or hate. Let me confess to you that your spontaneous and loving response all over India has convinced me that God is with us. No other proof of our struggle being one of self-purification is needed than that lakhs of India's women are actively helping it.

Having given much, more is now required of you. Men bore the principal share of the subscriptions to the Tilak *Swaraj* Fund. But completion of the *Swadeshi* programme is possible only if you give the largest share. Boycott is impossible unless you will surrender the whole of your foreign clothing. So long as the taste persists so long is complete renunciation impossible. And boycott means complete renunciation. We must be prepared to be satisfied with such cloth as India can produce, even as we are thankfully content with such children as God gives us. I have not known a mother throwing away her baby, even though it may appear ugly to an outsider. So should it be with the patriotic women of India about Indian manufactures. And for you only hand-spun and hand-woven can be regarded as Indian manufactures. During the transition stage you can only get coarse Khadi in abundance. You may add all the art to it that your taste allows or requires. And if you will be satisfied with coarse Khadi for a few months, India need not despair of seeing a revival of the fine, rich and coloured garments of old, which were once the envy and the despair of the world. I assure you that a six months' course of self-denial will show you that what we to-day regard as artistic is only falsely so, and that true art takes note not merely of form but also of what lies behind.

There is an art that kills and an art that gives life. The fine fabric that we have imported from the West or the Far East has literally killed millions of our brothers and sisters and delivered thousands of our dear sisters to a life of shame. True art must be evidence of happiness, contentment, and purity of its authors. And if you will have such art revived in our midst, the use of Khadi is obligatory on the best of you at the present moment.

And not only is the use of Khadi necessary for the success of the *Swadeshi* programme but it is imperative for every one of you to spin during your leisure hours. I have suggested to boys and men also that they should spin. Thousands of them, I know, are spinning daily. But the main burden of spinning must, as of old, fall on your shoulders. Two hundred years ago the women of India spun not only for home demand but also for foreign lands. They spun not merely coarse-counts but the finest that the world has ever spun. No machine has yet reached the fineness of the yarn spun by our ancestors. If, then, we are to cope with the demand for Khadi during the two months and afterwards, you must form spinning clubs, institute spinning competitions and flood the Indian market with hand-spun yarn. For this purpose some of you have to become experts in spinning, carding, and adjusting the spinning-wheels. This means ceaseless toil. You will not look upon spinning as a means of livelihood. For the middle class it should supplement the income of the family, and for very poor women, it is undoubtedly a means of livelihood. The spinning-wheel should be, as it was, the widows' loving companion. But for you who will read this appeal, it is presented as a duty, as *dharma*. If all the well-to-do women of India were to spin a certain quantity daily, they would make yarn cheap

and bring about much more quickly than otherwise the required fineness.

The economic and the moral salvation of India thus rests mainly with you. The future of India lies on your knees, for you will nurture the future generation. You can bring up the children of India to become simple, God-fearing, and brave men and women, or you can coddle them to be weaklings unfit to brave the storms of life and used to foreign fineries which they would find it difficult in after life to discard. The next few weeks will show of what stuff the women of India are made. I have not the shadow of a doubt as to your choice. The destiny of India is far safer in your hands than in the hands of a Government that has so exploited India's resources that she has lost faith in herself. At every one of women's meetings, I have asked for your blessings for the national effort and I have done so in the belief that you are pure, simple, and godly enough to give them with effect. You can ensure the fruitfulness of your blessings by giving up your foreign cloth and during your spare hours ceaselessly spinning for the Nation.

I remain,  
Your devoted brother,  
M. K. GANDHI.

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## THE ARREST OF THE ALI BROTHERS

### APPEAL TO THE MUSSULMANS OF INDIA

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The Ali Brothers were arrested by order of the Bombay Government in the third week of September 1921. Mr. Gandhi addressed the following open letter to the Mussulmans of India through the columns of *Young India* :

Dear Countrymen,—Whilst the arrest of Moulanas Shaukat Ali and Mahomed Ali has touched every Indian heart, I know what it has meant to you. The brave brothers are staunch lovers of their country, but they are Mussulmans first and everything else after, and it must be so with every religiously minded man. The Brothers have for years past represented all that is best and noblest in Islam. No two Mussulmans have done more than they to raise the status of Islam in India. They have promoted the cause of the Khilafat as no two other Mussulmans of India have. For they have been true and they dared to tell what they felt even in their internment in Chindwara. Their long internment did not demoralise or weaken them. They came out just as brave as they went in.

And since their discharge from internment, they have shown themselves true nationalists and you have taken pride in their being so.

The Brothers have, by their simplicity, humility, and inexhaustible energy, fired the imagination of the masses as no other Mussulman has.

All these qualities have endeared them to you. You regard them as your ideal men. You are therefore sorry



for their separation from you. Many besides you miss their genial faces. For me they had become inseparable. I seem to be without my arms. For anything connected with Mussulmans, Shaukat Ali was my guide and friend. He never once misled me. His judgment was sound and unerring in most cases. With the Brothers among us, I felt safe about Hindu-Muslim unity whose work they understood as few of us have.

But whilst we all miss them, we must not give way to grief or dejection. We must learn, each one of us, to stand alone. God only is our infallible and eternal Guide.

To be dejected is not only not to have known the Brothers, but it is, if I may venture to say so, not to know what religion is.

For, do we not learn in all religions that the spirit of the dear ones abides with us even when they physically leave us. Not only is the spirit of the Brothers with us but they are serving better by their suffering than if they were in our midst giving us some of their courage, hope, and energy. The secret of non-violence and non-co-operation lies in our realising that it is through suffering that we are to attain our goal. What is the renunciation of titles, councils, law courts, and schools, but a measure, very slight indeed, of suffering. That preliminary renunciation is a prelude to the larger suffering—the hardships of a gaol life and even the final consummation on the gallows—if need be. The more we suffer and the more of us suffer, the nearer we are to our cherished goal.

The earlier and the more clearly we recognise that it is not big meetings and demonstrations that would give us victory but quiet suffering, the earlier and more certain will be our victory.

I have made your cause my own because I believe it to be just. Khilafat, I have understood from your best men, is an ideal. You are not fighting to sustain any wrong or even misrule. You are backing the Turks because they represent the gentlemen of Europe, and because the European, and especially the English, prejudice against them is not because the Turks are worse than others as men, but because they are Mussulmans and will not assimilate the modern spirit of exploitation of weaker people and their lands. In fighting for the Turks, you are fighting to raise the dignity and the purity of your own faith.

. You have naturally, therefore, chosen pure methods to attain your end. It cannot be denied that both Mussulmans and Hindus have lost much in moral stamina. Both of us have become poor representatives of our respective faiths. Instead of each one of us becoming a true child of God, we expect others to live our religion and even to die for us. But we have now chosen a method that compels us to turn, each one of us, our face towards God. Non-co-operation presumes that our opponent with whom we non-co-operate, resorts to methods which are as questionable as the purpose he seeks to fulfil by such methods. We shall therefore find favour in the sight of God only by choosing methods which are different in kind from those of our opponents. This is a big claim we have made for ourselves, and we can attain success within the short time appointed by us, only if our methods are in reality radically different from those of the Government. Hence the foundation of our movement rests on complete non-violence whereas violence is the final refuge of the Government. And as no energy can be created without resistance, our non-resistance to Government violence must

bring the latter to a standstill. But our non-violence, to be true, must be in word, thought, and deed. It makes no difference that with you non-violence is an expedience. Whilst it lasts, you cannot consistently with your pledge harbour designs of violence. On the contrary, we must have implicit faith in our programme of non-violence which presupposes perfect accord between thought, word, and deed. I would like every Mussulman to realise, whilst the occasion for anger is the greatest, that by non-violence alone can we gain complete victory even during this year.

Nor is non-violence a visionary programme. Just imagine what the united resolve of seven crores of Mussulmans (not to count the Hindus) must mean. Should we not have succeeded already if all the titled men had given up their titles, all the lawyers had suspended their practice and all the schoolboys had left their schools and all had boycotted councils? But we must recognise that with many of us, flesh has proved too weak. Seven crores are called Mussulmans, and twenty-two crores are called Hindus, but only a few are true Mussulmans or true Hindus. Therefore if we have not gained our purpose, the cause lies within us. And if ours is, as we claim it is, a religious struggle, we dare not become impatient, save with ourselves, not even against one another.

The Brothers, I am satisfied, are as innocent as I claim I am of incitement to violence. Their's, therefore, is a spotless offering. They have done all in their power for Islam and their country. Now, if the Khilafat or the Punjab wrongs are not redressed and *Swaraj* is not established during this year, the fault will be yours and mine. We must remain non-violent but we must not be passive. We must repeat the formula of the Brothers

regarding the duty of soldiers and invite imprisonment. We need not think that the struggle cannot go on without even the best of us. If it cannot, we are neither fit for *Swaraj* nor for redressing the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs. We must declare from a thousand platforms that it is sinful for any Mussulman or Hindu to serve the existing Government whether as soldier or in any capacity whatsoever.

Above all, we must concentrate on complete boycott of foreign cloth whether British, Japanese, American or French, or any other, and begin, if we have not already done so, to introduce spinning-wheels and hand-looms in our own homes and manufacture all the cloth we need. This will be at once a test of our belief in non-violence for our country's freedom and for saving the Khilafat. It will be a test also of Hindu-Muslim unity and it will be a universal test of our faith in our own programme. I repeat my conviction that we can achieve our full purpose within one month of a complete boycott of foreign cloth. For we are then in a position, having confidence in our ability to control forces of violence, to offer civil disobedience if it is at all found necessary.

I can therefore find no balm for the deep wounds inflicted upon you by the Government other than non-violence translated into action by boycott of foreign cloth and manufacture of cloth in our own homes.

I am,

Your friend and comrade,

M. K. GANDHI.

## MANIFESTO ON FREEDOM OF OPINION

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The Government of Bombay in a *communiqué*, dated the 15th September 1921, explained their reasons for prosecuting the Ali Brothers. Mr. Gandhi, Mrs. Sarojini Naidu, Messrs. Motilal Nehru, N. C. Kelkar, S. E. Stokes, Lajpat Rai, Ajmal Khan and about 50 others issued the following Manifesto on 4th October :

In view of the prosecution of the Ali Brothers and others for the reasons stated in the Government of Bombay *communiqué*, dated the 15th September 1921, we, the undersigned, speaking in our individual capacity desire to state that it is the inherent right of every one to express his opinion without restraint about the propriety of citizens offering their services to, or remaining in the employ of, the Government whether in the Civil or the Military department.

We, the undersigned, state it as our opinion that it is contrary to National dignity for any Indian to serve as a civilian, and more especially as a soldier, under a system of Government which has brought about India's economic, moral and political degradation and which has used the soldiers and the police for repressing National aspirations, as for instance at the time of the Rowlatt Act agitation and which has used the soldiers for crushing the liberty of the Arabs, the Egyptians, the Turks, and other Nations who have done no harm to India.

We are also of opinion that it is the duty of every Indian soldier and civilian to sever his connection with the Government and find some other means of livelihood.

## REPLY TO RABINDRANATH TAGORE

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In the October (1921) Number of the *Modern Review*, Rabindranath Tagore wrote an article "The Call of Truth" criticising some features of the non-co-operation movement. Mr. Gandhi replied to the criticism in the *Young India* of the 13th October:

The Bard of Shantiniketan has contributed to the *Modern Review* a brilliant essay on the present movement. It is a series of word pictures which he alone can paint. It is an eloquent protest against authority, slave mentality or whatever description one gives of blind acceptance of a passing mania whether out of fear or hope. It is a welcome and wholesome reminder to all workers that we must not be impatient, we must not impose authority no matter how great. The Poet tells us summarily to reject anything and everything that does not appeal to our reason or heart. If we would gain *Swaraj*, we must stand for Truth as we know it at any cost. A reformer who is enraged because his message is not accepted, must retire to the forest to learn how to watch, wait, and pray. With all this one must heartily agree, and the Poet deserves the thanks of his countrymen for standing up for Truth and Reason. There is no doubt that our last state will be worse than our first if we surrender our reason into somebody's keeping. And I would feel extremely sorry to discover that the country had unthinkingly and blindly followed all I had said or done. I am quite conscious of the fact that blind surrender to love is often more mischievous than a forced surrender to the lash of the tyrant. There is hope for the slave of the brute, none for

that of love. Love is needed to strengthen the weak, love becomes tyrannical when it extracts obedience from an unbeliever. To mutter a *mantra* without knowing its value is unmanly. It is good therefore that the Poet has invited all who are slavishly mimicking the call of the *charkha* boldly to declare their revolt. His essay serves as warning to us all who, in our impatience, are betrayed into intolerance or even violence against those who differ from us. I regard the Poet as a sentinel warning us against the approach of enemies called Bigotry, Lethargy, Intolerance, Ignorance, Inertia, and other members of that brood.

But whilst I agree with all that the Poet has said as to the necessity of watchfulness lest we cease to think, I must not be understood to endorse the proposition that there is any such blind obedience on a large scale in the country to-day. I have again and again appealed to reason, and let me assure him that, if happily the country has come to believe in the spinning-wheel as the giver of plenty, it has done so after laborious thinking, after great hesitation. I am not sure that even now educated India has assimilated the truth underlying the *charka*. He must not mistake the surface dirt for the substance underneath. Let him go deeper and see for himself whether the *charka* has been accepted from blind faith or from reasoned necessity.

I do indeed ask the Poet and the Sage to spin the wheel as a sacrament. When there is war, the poet lays down the lyre, the lawyer his law reports, the school-boy his books. The Poet will sing the true note after the war is over, the lawyer will have occasion to go to his law books when people have time to fight among themselves. When a house is on fire, all the

inmates go out and each one takes up a bucket to quench the fire. When all about me are dying for want of food, the only occupation permissible to me is to feed the hungry. It is my conviction that India is a house on fire, because its manhood is being daily scorched; it is dying of hunger, because it has no work to buy food with. Khulna is starving, not because the people cannot work but because they have no work. The Ceded Districts are passing successively through a fourth famine. Orissa is a land suffering from chronic famines. Our cities are not India. India lives in her seven and a half lakhs of villages and the cities live upon the villages. They do not bring their wealth from other countries. The city people are brokers and commission agents for the big houses of Europe, America, and Japan. The cities have co-operated with the latter in the bleeding process that has gone on for the past two hundred years. It is my belief based on experience that India is daily growing poorer. The circulation about her feet and legs has almost stopped. And if we do not take care, she will collapse altogether.

To a people famishing and idle, the only acceptable form in which God can dare appear is work and promise of food as wages. God created man to work for his food and said that those who ate without work were thieves. Eighty per cent. of India are compulsorily thieves half the year. Is it any wonder if India has become one vast prison? Hunger is the argument that is driving India to the spinning-wheel. The call of the spinning-wheel is the noblest of all, because it is the call of love. And love is *Swaraj*. The spinning-wheel will curb the mind when time spent on necessary physical labour can be said to do so. We must think of



the millions who are to-day less than animals, who are almost in a dying state. The spinning-wheel is the reviving draught for millions of our dying countrymen and countrywomen. "Why should I, who have no need to work for food, spin?" may be the question asked. Because I am eating what does not belong to me. I am living on the spoliation of my countrymen. Trace the course of every pice that finds its way into your pocket and you will realise the truth of what I write. *Swaraj* has no meaning for the millions if they do not know how to employ their enforced idleness. The attainment of this *Swaraj* is possible within a short time, and it is so possible only by the revival of the spinning-wheel.

I do want growth, I do want self-determination, I do want freedom, but I want all these for the soul. I doubt if the steel age is an advance upon the flint age. I am indifferent. It is the evolution of the soul to which the intellect and all our faculties have to be devoted. I have no difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man armoured after the modern style making some lasting and new discovery for mankind, but I have less difficulty in imagining the possibility of a man having nothing but a bit of flint and a nail for lighting his path or his match-lock ever singing new hymns of praise and delivering to an aching world a message of peace and goodwill upon earth. A plea for the spinning-wheel is a plea for recognising the dignity of labour.

I claim that in losing the spinning-wheel we lost our left lung. We are, therefore, suffering from galloping consumption. The restoration of the wheel arrests the progress of the fell disease. There are certain things which all must do in all climes. The spinning-wheel is the thing which all must turn in the Indian clime for the

transition stage at any rate and the vast majority must for all time.

It was our love of foreign cloth that ousted the wheel from its position of dignity. Therefore I consider it a sin to wear foreign cloth. I must confess that I do not draw a sharp or any distinction between economics and ethics. Economics that hurt the moral well-being of an individual or a nation are immoral and therefore sinful. Thus the economics that permit one country to prey upon another are immoral. It is sinful to buy and use articles made by sweated labour. It is sinful to eat American wheat and let my neighbour, the grain dealer, starve for want of custom. Similarly it is sinful for me to wear the latest finery of Regent Street when I know that if I had but worn the things woven by the neighbouring spinners and weavers, that would have clothed me, and fed and clothed them. On the knowledge of my sin bursting upon me, I must consign the foreign garments to the flames and thus purify myself and thenceforth rest content with the rough Khadi made by my neighbours. On knowing that my neighbours may not, having given up the occupation, take kindly to the spinning-wheel, I must take it up myself and thus make it popular.

I venture to suggest to the Poet that the clothes I ask him to burn must be and are his. If they had, to his knowledge, belonged to the poor or the ill-clad, he would long ago have restored to the poor what was theirs. In burning my foreign clothes I burn my shame. I must refuse to insult the naked by giving them clothes they do not need, instead of giving them work which they sorely need. I will not commit the sin of becoming their patron, but on learning that I had assisted in

impoverishing them, I would give them a privileged position and give them neither crumbs nor cast off clothing, but the best of my food and clothes and associate myself with them in work.

Nor is the scheme of Non-Co-operation or *Swadeshi* an exclusive doctrine. My modesty has prevented me from declaring from the house-top that the message of non-co-operation, non-violence, and *Swadeshi* is a message to the world. It must fall flat if it does not bear fruit in the soil where it has been delivered. At the present moment India has nothing to share with the world, save her degradation, pauperism, and plagues. Is it her ancient Shastras that we should send to the world? Well, they are printed in many editions, and an incredulous and idolatrous world refuses to look at them, because we, the heirs and custodians, do not live them. Before therefore I can think of sharing with the world, I must possess. Our non-co-operation is neither with the English nor with the West. Our non-co-operation is with the system the English have established, with the material civilisation and its attendant greed and exploitation of the weak. Our non-co-operation is a retirement within ourselves. Our non-co-operation is a refusal to co-operate with the English administrators on their own terms. We say to them: "Come and co-operate with us on our terms and it will be well for us, for you, and the world." We must refuse to be lifted off our feet. A drowning man cannot save others. In order to be fit to save others we must try to save ourselves. Indian nationalism is not exclusive, nor aggressive, nor destructive. It is health-giving, religious and therefore humanitarian. India must learn to live before she can aspire to die for humanity. The mice which helplessly find themselves

between the cat's teeth, acquire no merit from their enforced sacrifice. True to his poetical instinct, the Poet lives for the morrow and would have us do likewise. He presents to our admiring gaze the beautiful picture of the birds early in the morning singing hymns of praise as they soar into the sky. These birds had their day's food and soared with rested wings in whose veins new blood had flown during the previous night. But I have had the pain of watching birds who, for want of strength, could not be coaxed even into a flutter of their wings. The human bird under the Indian sky gets up weaker than when he pretended to retire. For millions it is an eternal vigil or an eternal trance. It is an indescribably painful state which has to be experienced to be realised. I found it impossible to soothe suffering patients with a song from Kabir. The hungry millions ask for one poem : invigorating food. They cannot be given it. They must earn it. And they can earn only by the sweat of their brow.

## THE PRINCE OF WALES' VISIT

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It was announced that H. R. H. The Prince of Wales was to arrive in India on November 17, 1921, and great preparations were made by Government to give the Royal visitor a fitting reception. Writing in *Young India* of October 27, Mr. Gandhi urged his countrymen to boycott the Prince's visit. With no ill-will against the Prince as man, the people were asked to dissociate themselves from all functions and festivities arranged in his honour by the Government. Mr. Gandhi wrote :

I have no manner of doubt that the Prince's visit is being exploited for advertising the "benign" British rule in India. It is a crime against us if His Royal Highness is being brought for personal pleasure and sport when India is seething with discontent, when the masses are saturated with disaffection towards the system under which they are governed, when famine is raging in Khulna and the Ceded Districts and when an armed conflict is raging in Malabar: it is a crime against India to spend millions of rupees on a mere show when millions of men are living in a state of chronic starvation. Eight lakhs of rupees have been voted away by the Bombay Council alone for the pageant.

The visit is being heralded by repression in the land. In Sind over fifty-six non-co-operators are in gaol. Some of the bravest of Mussulmans are being tried for holding certain opinions. Nineteen Bengal workers have been just imprisoned including Mr. Sen Gupta, the leading Barrister of the place. A Mussulman Pir and three other selfless-workers are already in gaol for a similar "crime". Several leaders of Karnatak are also imprisoned and now its chief man is on trial for saying what I have said

repeatedly in these columns and what Congressmen have been saying all over during the past twelve months. Several leaders of the Central Provinces have been similarly deprived of their liberty. A most popular doctor, Dr. Paranjpye, a man universally respected for his selflessness, is suffering rigorous imprisonment like a common felon. I have by no means exhausted the list of imprisonments of non-co-operators. Whether they are a test of real crime or an answer to growing disaffection, the Prince's visit is, to say the least, most inopportune. There is no doubt that the people do not want His Royal Highness to visit India at the present juncture. They have expressed their opinion in no uncertain terms. They have declared that Bombay should observe *hartal* on the day of his landing at Bombay. It is a clear imposition upon the people to bring the Prince in the teeth of their opposition.

What are we to do in the circumstances? We must organise a complete boycott of all functions held in the Prince's honour. We must religiously refrain from attending charities, fetes or fireworks organised for the purpose. We must refuse to illuminate or to send our children to see the organised illuminations. To this end we must publish leaflets by the million and distribute them amongst the people, telling them what their duty in the matter is and it would be true honour done to the Prince if Bombay on the day of his landing wears the appearance of a deserted city.

But we must isolate the Prince from the person. We have no ill-will against the Prince as man. He probably knows nothing of the feeling in India, he probably knows nothing about repression. Equally probably he is ignorant of the fact that the Punjab wound is still bleeding, that the treachery towards India in the

matter of the Khilafat is still rankling in every Indian breast, and that on the Government's own admission the reformed councils contain members who, though nominally elected, do not in any sense represent even the few lakhs who are on the electoral rolls. To do or to attempt to do any harm to the person of the Prince would be not only cruel and inhuman, but it would be on our part a piece of treachery towards ourselves and him; for we have voluntarily pledged ourselves to be and remain non-violent. Any injury or insult to the Prince by us will be a greater wrong done by us to Islam and India than any the English have done. They know no better. We can lay no such claim to ignorance; we have with our eyes open and before God and man promised not to hurt a single individual in any way connected with the system we are straining every nerve to destroy. It must therefore be our duty to take every precaution to protect his person as our own from all harm.

In spite of all our effort, we know that there will be some who would want to take part in the various functions from fear or hope or choice. They have as much right to do what they like as we have to do what we like. That is the test of the freedom we wish to have and enjoy. Let us, whilst we are being subjected by an insolent bureaucracy to a severe irritation, exercise the greatest restraint. And if we can exhibit our firm resolve to have nothing to do with it by dissociating ourselves from its pageant, at the same time that we show forbearance towards those who differ from us, we would advance our cause in a most effective manner.

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## THE BOMBAY RIOTS

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### I. THE STATEMENT

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H. R. H. the Prince of Wales arrived in Bombay on the 17th November, 1921. Non-co-operators all over the country had organised what are known as *hartals*, closing of shops and suspending all work, and boycotting the Prince. In Bombay such activities resulted in a great riot in which all parties suffered owing to the hooliganism of the mischievous elements in the mob who violated Mr. Gandhi's injunctions to be non-violent and brought about a terrible riot. Mr. Gandhi was then in Bombay and after witnessing the scene of the tragedy, wrote some of the most stirring letters which, coupled with the exertions of men of all parties, restored peace in the city. The following is the text of Mr. Gandhi's first statement:

The reputation of Bombay, the hope of my dreams, was being stained yesterday even whilst in my simplicity I was congratulating her citizens upon their non-violence in the face of grave provocation. For the volunteers with their captain were arrested during the previous night for pasting posters under authority on private property. The posters advised the people to boycott the welcome to the Prince. They were destroyed. The *Swaraj Sabha's* office was mysteriously entered into and the unused posters, so far as I am aware not declared unlawful, were also removed. The Prince's visit itself and the circumstances attending the ceremonials arranged, and the public money wasted for the manufacture of a welcome to His Royal Highness, constituted an unbearable provocation. And yet Bombay has remained self-restrained. This, I thought, was a matter for congratulation. The burning of the pile of foreign cloth was an eloquent counter demonstration to



the interested official demonstration. Little did I know that at the very time that the Prince was passing through the decorated route and the pile of foreign cloth was burning in another part of the city, the mill-hands were in criminal disobedience of the wishes of their masters emptying them, first one and then the others by force, that a swelling mob was molesting the peaceful passengers in the tram-cars and holding up the tram traffic, that it was forcibly depriving those that were wearing foreign caps of their head-dresses and pelting inoffensive Europeans. As the day went up, the fury of the mob, now intoxicated with its initial success, rose also. They burnt tram-cars and a motor, smashed liquor-shops and burnt two.

#### DETAILS OF OUTBREAK

I heard of the outbreak at about one o'clock. I motored with some friends to the area of disturbances and heard the most painful and the most humiliating story of molestation of Parsi sisters. A few were assaulted and even had their *saris* torn from them. No one among a crowd of over fifteen hundred who had surrounded my car, denied the charge as a Parsi with hot rage and quivering lips was with the greatest deliberation narrating the story. An elderly Parsi gentleman said : "Please save us from the mob rule."

This news of the rough handling of Parsi sisters pierced me like a dart. I felt that my sisters or daughters had been hurt by a violent mob. Yes, some Parsis had joined the welcome. They had a right to hold their own view, free of molestation. There can be no coercion in *Swaraj*. The Moplah fanatic, who forcibly converts a Hindu, believes that he is acquiring religious merit. A

non-co-operator or his associate who uses coercion, has no apology whatsoever for his criminality.

As I reached the two tanks I found, too, a liquor-shop smashed and two policemen badly wounded and lying unconscious on cots without anybody caring for them. I alighted. Immediately the crowd surrounded me and yelled : "Mahatma Gandhiki-jai". That sound usually grates on my ears, but it has grated never so much as it did yesterday when the crowd, unmindful of the two sick brethren, choked me with the shout at the top of their voices. I rebuked them and they were silent. Water was brought for the two wounded men. I requested two of my companions and some from the crowd to take the dying policemen to the hospital.

I proceeded then to the scene, a little further up, where I saw a fire rising. There were two tram-cars which were burnt by the crowd. On returning I witnessed a burning motor car. I appealed to the crowd to disperse, told them that they had damaged the cause of the Khilafat, the Punjab and *Swaraj*. I returned sick at heart and in a chastened mood.

At about 5, a few brave Hindu young men came to report that in Bhindi Bazar the crowd was molesting every passer-by, who had a foreign cap on, and even seriously beating him if he refused to give up his cap. A brave old Parsi who defied the crowd and would not give up his *pugree* was badly handled. Moulana Azad Sobhani and I went to Bhindi Bazar and reasoned with the crowd. We told them that they were denying their religion by hurting innocent men. The crowd made a show of dispersing. The police were there, but they were exceedingly restrained. We went further on and retracing our steps found to our horror a liquor-shop on

fire; even the fire-brigade was obstructed in its work. Thanks to the efforts of Pandit Nekiram Kharan and others, the inmates of the shop were able to come out.

#### NATURE OF THE CROWD

The crowd did not consist of hooligans only or boys. It was not an unintelligent crowd. They were not all mill-hands. It was essentially a mixed crowd, unprepared and unwilling to listen to anybody. For the moment it had lost its head, and it was not a crowd but several crowds numbering in all less than twenty thousand. It was bent upon mischief and destruction.

I heard that there was firing resulting in deaths, and that in the Anglo-Indian quarters every one who passed with khadder on, came in for hard beating if he did not put off his khadder cap or shirt. I heard that many were seriously injured. I am writing this in the midst of six Hindu and Mussulman workers who have just come in with broken heads and bleeding and one with a broken nasal bone and another lacerated wounds and in danger of losing his life. They went to Parel led by Maulana Azad Sobhani and Moazzam Ali to pacify the mill-hands who, it was reported, were holding up the tram-cars there. The workers, however, were enabled to proceed to their destination. They returned with their bleedings to speak for themselves.

#### CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

Thus the hope of reviving mass civil disobedience has once more been dashed, in my opinion, to pieces. The atmosphere for mass civil disobedience is absent. It is not enough that such an atmosphere is to be found in Bardoli and therefore it may go on side by side with the violence in Bombay. This is impossible. Neither Bardoli nor Bombay can be treated as separate unconnected

units. They are parts of one great indivisible whole. It was possible to isolate Malabar; it was also possible to disregard Malegaon. But it is not possible to ignore Bombay. Non-co-operators cannot escape liability. It is true that non-co-operators were ceaselessly remonstrating everywhere with the people at considerable risk to themselves to arrest or stop the mischief and that they are responsible for saving many precious lives. But that is not enough for launching out on civil disobedience or to discharge them from liability for the violence that has taken place. We claim to have established a peaceful atmosphere, i.e., to have attained by our non-violence sufficient control over the people to keep their violence under check. We have failed when we ought to have succeeded, for yesterday was a day of our trial. We were under our pledge bound to protect the person of the Prince from any harm or insult, and we broke that pledge inasmuch as any one of us insulted or injured a single European or any other who took part in the welcome to the Prince. They were as much entitled to take part in the welcome as we were to refrain.

Nor can I shirk my own personal responsibility. I am more instrumental than any other in bringing into being the spirit of revolt. I find myself not fully capable of controlling and disciplining that spirit. I must do penance for it. For me the struggle is essentially religious. I believe in fasting and prayer and I propose henceforth to observe every Monday a twenty-four hour's fast till *Swaraj* is obtained.

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## II. MESSAGE TO THE CITIZENS OF BOMBAY

Shocked at the riot and bloodshed that he witnessed in Bombay, Mr. Gandhi issued the following appeal to the men and women of Bombay on the morning of the 19th November :

Men and Women of Bombay,—It is not possible to describe the agony I have suffered during the past two days. I am writing this now at 3-30 A.M. in perfect peace. After 2 hours of prayer and meditation I have found it. I must refuse to eat or drink anything but water till the Hindus and Mahomedans of Bombay have made peace with the Parsis, Christians, and Jews, and till non-co-operators have made peace with co-operators. The *Swaraj* that I have witnessed during the last two days has stunk in my nostrils. Hindu-Muslim unity had been a menace to the handful of Parsis, Christians, and Jews. The non-violence of the non-co-operators has been worse than violence of co-operators. For with non-violence on our lips we have terrorised those who have differed from us and in so doing we have denied our God. There is only one God for us all, whether we find Him through Koran, Bible, Zend Avesta, Talmud or Gita, and He is the God of Truth and Love.

I have no interest in living save for this faith in me. I cannot hate the Englishman or anyone else. I have spoken and written much against his institutions, especially the one he has set up in India. I shall continue to do so if I live; but we must not mistake my condemnation of the system for the man. My religion required me to love him as I love myself. I would deny God if I did not attempt to prove it at this critical moment. And the Parsis—I have meant every word I have said about them. Hindus and Mussulmans would be unworthy of freedom if they do not defend them and

their honour with their lives. They have only recently proved their liberality and friendship. Mussulmans are specially beholden to them; for Parsis have, compared to their numbers, given more than they themselves to the Khilafat funds. I cannot face again the appealing eyes of Parsi men and women that I saw on the 17th instant as I passed through them, unless Hindus and Mussulmans have expressed full and free repentance, nor can I face Mr. Andrews when he returns from East Africa if we have done no reparation to Indian-born Christians whom we are bound to protect as our own brothers and sisters. We may not think of what they in self-defence or by way of reprisals have done to some of us. You can see quite clearly that I must do the utmost reparation to this handful of men and women, who have been the victims of forces that have come into being largely through my instrumentality. I invite every Hindu and Mussulman to do likewise, but I do not want anyone to fast which is only good when it comes in answer to prayer and as a felt yearning of the soul. I invite every Hindu and Mussulman to retire to his home and ask God for forgiveness and to befriend the injured communities from the bottom of their hearts. I invite my fellow-workers not to waste a word of sympathy on me. I need or deserve none. But I invite them to make ceaseless effort to regain control over the turbulent elements. This is a terribly true struggle. There is no room for sham or humbug in it. Before we can make any further progress without struggle, we must cleanse our hearts.

I am, Your Servant,  
M. K. GANDHI.

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### III. APPEAL TO THE HOOLIGANS OF BOMBAY

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Mr. Gandbi issued another appeal, this time to the hooligans of Bombay who brought about the terrible scenes of murder. The following is the appeal which was circulated broadcast in all vernaculars on November 21 :

To the hooligans of Bombay,—The most terrible mistake I have made is, that I thought non-co-operators had acquired influence over you and that you had understood the relative value of political wisdom of non-violence though not the moral necessity of it. I had thought that you had sufficiently understood the interests of your country not to meddle with the movement to its detriment and that, therefore, you would have wisdom enough not to give way to your worst passions, but it cuts me to the quick to find that you have used mass awakening for your own lust for plunder, rapine and even indulging in your worst animal appetite. Whether you call yourself a Hindu, Mahomedan, Parsi, Christian or Jew, you have certainly failed to consider even your own religious interests. Some of my friends would, I know, accuse me of ignorance of human nature. If I believed the charge, I would plead guilty and retire from human assemblies and return only after acquiring knowledge of human nature, but I know that I had no difficulty in controlling even Indian hooligans in South Africa. I was able because I had succeeded in approaching them through co-workers when I had no personal contact with them. In your case I see we have failed to reach you. I do not believe you to be incapable of responding to the noble call of religion and country. See what you have done. Hindu-Mussulman hooligans have violated the sanctity of Parsi temples, and they have exposed their own to

similar risk from the wrath of Parsi hooligans. Because some Parsis have chosen to partake in the welcome to the Prince, Hindu and Mussulman hooligans have roughly handled every Parsi they have met. . . . .

Thus, we are all moving in a vicious circle and the country suffers. I write this not to blame, but to warn you and to confess that we have grievously neglected you. I am doing penance in one way, other workers are doing in another way. Messrs. Azad Sobhani, Jayakar, Jamnadas, Mitha, Saihe, Moazam Ali and many others have been risking their lives in bringing under control this unfortunate ebullition. Srimati Sarojini Naidu has fearlessly gone in your midst to reason with you and to appeal to you. Our work in your midst has only just begun. Will you not give us a chance by stopping the mad process of retaliation? Hindus and Mussulmans should be ashamed to take reprisals against the Parsis or Christians. The latter must know it to be suicidal to battle against the Hindu and Mussulman ferocity by brute strength. The result is, they must seek assistance of an alien Government, *i.e.*, sell their freedom. Surely the best course for them is to realise their nationality and believe that reasoning Hindus and Mussulmans must and will protect the interests of the minorities before their own. Anyway, the problem before Bombay is to ensure absolute protection of the minorities and acquisition of control over the rowdy element, and I shall trust that you, hooligans of Bombay, will now restrain your hand and give a chance to the workers who are desirous of serving you. May God help you!

I am, Your Friend,

M. K. GANDHI.

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#### IV. APPEAL TO CO-WORKERS

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Late on the 22nd evening, Mr. Gandhi issued the following Manifesto to his co-workers :

Comrades,—The past few days had been a fiery ordeal for me, and God is to be thanked that some of us had not been found wanting. The broken heads before me, and the dead bodies of which I have heard from an unimpeachable authority, are sufficient evidence of the fact. Workers have lost their limbs, or their lives, or have suffered bruises in the act of preserving peace, of weaning mad countrymen from their wrath. These deaths and injuries show that, in spite of the error of many of our countrymen, some of us are prepared to die for the attainment of our goal. If all of us had imbibed the spirit of non-violence, or if some had, and others had remained passive, no blood need have been spilt, but it was not to be. Some must therefore voluntarily give their blood in order that a bloodless atmosphere may be created, so long as there are people weak enough to seek the aid of those who have superior skill or means for doing it. And that is why the Parsis and Christians sought and received assistance of the Government, so that the Government openly took sides, and armed and aided the latter in retaliatory madness and criminally neglected to protect a single life among those who, though undoubtedly guilty in the first instance, were victims of unpardonable wrath of the Parsis, Christians, and Jews. The Government have thus appeared in their nakedness as party doing violence, not merely to preserve the peace but to sustain aggressive violence of its injured supporters. The police and military

looked on with callous indifference, whilst the Christians in their justifiable indignation deprived innocent men of their white cap and hammered those who would not surrender them, or whilst the Parsis assaulted or shot, not in self-defence but because the victims happened to be Hindus or Mussûlmans or non-co-operators. I can excuse the aggrieved Parsis or Christians, but can find no excuse for the military and police for taking sides. So the task before the workers is to take the blow from the Government and our erring countrymen. This is the only way open to us of sterilizing the forces of violence. The way to immediate *Swaraj* lies through our gaining control over the forces of violence and that not by greater violence but by moral influence. We must see as clearly as daylight that it is impossible for us to be trained and armed for violence, if active enough, for displacing the existing Government. . . .

I wish I could convince every one that we have materially retarded our progress to our triple goal. But all is not lost if the workers realise and act up to their responsibility. We must secure the full co-operation of the rowdies of Bombay. We must know the mill-hands. They must either work for Government or for us, *i.e.*, for violence or against it. There is no middle way. They must not interfere with us. Either they must be amenable to our love or helplessly submit it to the bayonet. They must not seek shelter under the banner of non-violence for the purpose of doing violence. And in order to carry our message to them, we must reach every mill-hand individually and let him understand and appreciate the struggle.

Similarly, we must reach the rowdy elements, befriend them and help them to understand the religious character

of the struggle. We must neither neglect them nor pander to them. We must become true servants. The peace that we are aiming at, is not a patched up peace. We must have fair guarantees of its continuance without the aid of Government, and sometimes even in spite of its activity to the contrary. There must be a heart union between the Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsis, Christians and Jews. The three latter communities may and will distrust the other two. The recent occurrences must strengthen that distrust. We must go out of our way to conquer their distrust. We must not molest them if they do not become non-co-operators, or do not adopt *Swadeshi*, or white khaddar cap which has become its symbol. We must not be irritated against them even if they side with the Government on every occasion. We have to make them ours by loving service.

This is the necessity of the situation. The alternative is a civil war, and a civil war with a third party consolidating itself by siding now with one and then with the other, must be held an impossibility for the near future. And what is true of smaller communities is also true of co-operators. We must not be impatient with or intolerant to them. We are bound to recognise their freedom to co-operate with the Government if we claim freedom to non-co-operate. What would we have felt if we are in a minority, and co-operators being a majority had used violence against us. Non-co-operation and non-violence is the most expeditious method known in the world of winning our opponents. And our struggle consists in winning our opponents, including the Englishmen over to our side.

I am, Your Grateful Comrade,  
M. K. GANDHI.

## V. PEACE AT LAST

Mr. Gandhi broke his fast in the midst of a gathering of co-operators, non-co-operators, Hindus, Mussulmans, Christians and Parsis. There were speeches of goodwill by a representative of each community. The members of the Working Committee were also present. Mr. Gandhi made a statement in Gujarati before breaking his fast. The following is its translation :

Friends,—It delights my heart to see Hindus, Mussulmans, Parsis and Christians met together in this little assembly. I hope that our frugal fruit-repast of this morning will be a sign of our permanent friendship. Though a born optimist, I am not in the habit of building castles in the air. This meeting therefore cannot deceive me. We shall be able to realize the hope of permanent friendship between all communities, only if we who have assembled together will incessantly strive to build it up. I am breaking my fast upon the strength of your assurances. I have not been unmindful of the affection with which innumerable friends have surrounded me during these four days. I shall ever remain grateful to them. Being drawn by them I am plunging into this stormy ocean out of the haven of peace in which I have been during these few days. I assure you that in spite of the tales of misery that have been poured into my ears, I have enjoyed peace because of a hungry stomach. I know that I cannot enjoy it after breaking the fast. I am too human not to be touched by the sorrows of others and when I find no remedy for alleviating them, my human nature so agitates me that I pine to embrace death like a long-lost dear friend. Therefore I warn all the friends here that if real peace is not established in Bombay, and if disturbances break out again, and if as a result they find me driven to a still severer ordeal, they must not be surprised or troubled. If they have any doubt about peace having been

established, if each community has still bitterness of feeling and suspicion, and if we are all not prepared to forget and forgive past wrongs, I would much rather that they did not press me to break the fast. Such a restraint I would regard as a test of true friendship.

I venture to saddle special responsibility upon Hindus and Mussulmans. The majority of them are non-co-operators. Non-violence is the creed they have accepted for the time being. They have the strength of numbers. They can stand in spite of the opposition of the smaller communities without Government aid. If, therefore, they will remain friendly and charitable towards the smaller communities, all will be well. I will beseech the Parsis, the Christians and the Jews to bear in mind the new awakening in India. They will see many-coloured waters in the ocean of Hindu and Mussulman neighbours who may misbehave with them and immediately report to the Hindu and Mussulman leaders through their own leaders with a view to getting justice. Indeed, I am hoping that as a result of the unfortunate discord, a Mahajan will come into being for the disposal of all inter-racial disputes.

The value of this assembly in my opinion consists in the fact that worshippers of the same one God we are enabled to partake of this harmless repast together in spite of our differences of opinion. We have not assembled with the object to-day of reducing such differences, certainly not of surrendering a single principle we may hold dear, but we have met in order to demonstrate that we can remain true to our principles and yet also remain free from ill-will towards one another. May God bless our effort!

## VI. THE MORAL ISSUE

Mr. Gandhi, writing in *Young India* of December 24, pointed out the lesson of the tragedy and wrote on the moral issue before the country :

As soon as we lose the moral basis, we cease to be religious. There is no such thing as religion overriding morality. Man, for instance, cannot be untruthful, cruel, or incontinent and claim to have God on his side. In Bombay, the sympathisers of non-co-operation lost their moral balance. They were enraged against the Parsis and the Christians who took part in the welcome to the Prince and sought to "teach them a lesson". They invited reprisals and got them. It became after the 17th a game of seesaw in which no one really gained and everybody lost.

*Swaraj* does not lie that way. India does not want Bolshevism. The people are too peaceful to stand anarchy. They will bow the knee to any one who restores so-called order. Let us recognise the Indian psychology. We need not stop to inquire whether such hankering after peace is a virtue or a vice. . . .

*Swaraj* is freedom for every one, the smallest among us, to do as he likes without any physical interference with his liberty. Non-violent non-co-operation is the method whereby we cultivate the freest public opinion and get it enforced. When there is complete freedom of opinion, that of the majority must prevail. If we are in a minority, we can prove worthy of our religion by remaining true to it in the face of coercion. The Prophet submitted to the coercion of the majority and remained true to his faith. And when he found himself in a majority, he declared to his followers that there should be no compulsion in religion. Let us not again, either by verbal or physical violence, depart from the injunction and by our own folly further put back the hands of the clock of progress.

## CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

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Though the author of the Civil Disobedience movement in India, Mr. Gandhi was always alive to its dangers. He therefore insisted that his conditions should be fulfilled *in toto* before any Taluka could embark on a campaign of Civil Disobedience. He was always very cautious in permitting Civil Disobedience as will be seen from the following article in *Young India*. He restrained at a certain stage the majority of the Congress Committee from a rushing and perilous programme :

Civil disobedience was on the lips of every one of the members of the All-India Congress Committee. Not having really ever tried it, every one appeared to be enamoured of it from a mistaken belief in it as a sovereign remedy for present-day ills. I feel sure that it can be made such if we can produce the necessary atmosphere for it. For individuals there always is that atmosphere except when their civil disobedience is certain to lead to bloodshed. I discovered this exception during the *Satyagraha* days. But even so a call may come which one dare not neglect, cost it what it may. I can clearly see that time is coming to me when I must refuse obedience to every single State-made law, even though there may be a certainty of bloodshed. When neglect of the call means a denial of God, civil disobedience becomes a peremptory duty.

Mass civil disobedience stands on a different footing. It can only be tried in a calm atmosphere. It must be the calmness of strength not weakness, knowledge not ignorance. Individual civil disobedience may be and often is vicarious. Mass civil disobedience may be and often is selfish in the sense that individuals expect personal

gain from their disobedience. Thus in South Africa: Kallenbach and Polak offered vicarious civil disobedience. They had nothing to gain. Thousands offered it because they expected personal gain also in the shape, say, of the removal of the annual poll-tax levied upon ex-indentured men and their wives and grown-up children. It is sufficient in mass civil disobedience if the resisters understand the working of the doctrine.

It was in a practically uninhabited tract of country that I was arrested in South Africa when I was marching into prohibited area with over two to three thousand men and some women. The company included several Pathans and others who were able-bodied men. It was the greatest testimony of merit the Government of South Africa gave to the movement. They know that we were as harmless as we were determined. It was easy enough for that body of men to cut to pieces those who arrested me. It would have not only been a most cowardly thing to do, but it would have been a treacherous breach of their own pledge, and it would have meant ruin to the struggle for freedom and the forcible deportation of every Indian from South Africa. But the men were no rabble. They were disciplined soldiers and all the better for being unarmed. Though I was to inform them, they did not disperse, nor did they turn back. They marched on to their destination till they were every one of them arrested and imprisoned. So far as I am aware, this was one instance of discipline and non-violence for which there is no parallel in history. Without such restraint, I see no hope of successful mass civil disobedience here.

We must dismiss the idea of overawing the Government by huge demonstrations every time some one is arrested. On the contrary we must treat arrest as the



normal condition of the life of a non-co-operator. For we must seek arrest and imprisonment as a soldier who goes to a battle to seek death. We expect to bear down the opposition of the Government by courting and not by avoiding imprisonment, even though it be by showing our supposed readiness to be arrested and imprisoned. Civil disobedience then emphatically means our desire to surrender to a single unarmed policeman. Our triumph consists in thousands being led to the prisons like lambs to the slaughter-house. If the lambs of the world had been willingly led, they had long ago saved themselves from the butcher's knife. Our triumph consists again in being imprisoned for no wrong whatever. The greater our innocence, the greater our strength and the swifter our victory.

As it is, this Government is cowardly. We are afraid of imprisonment. The Government takes advantage of our fear of gaols. If only our men and women welcome gaols as health-resorts, we will cease to worry about the dear ones put in gaols which our countrymen in South Africa need to nickname : His Majesty's Hotels.

We have too long been mentally disobedient to the laws of the State and have too often surreptitiously evaded them, to be fixed all of a sudden for civil disobedience. Disobedience to be civil has to be open and non-violent.

Complete civil disobedience is a state of peaceful rebellion—a refusal to obey every single State-made law. It is certainly more dangerous than an armed rebellion. For it can never be down if the civil resisters are prepared to face extreme hardship. It is based upon an implicit belief in the absolute efficacy of innocent suffering. By noiselessly going to prison a civil resister ensures a calm atmosphere. The wrong-doer wearies of

wrong-doing in the absence of resistance. All pleasure is lost when the victim betrays no resistance. A full grasp of the conditions of successful civil resistance is necessary at least on the part of the representatives of the people before we can launch out on an enterprise of such magnitude. The quickest remedies are always fraught with the greatest danger and require the utmost skill in handling them. It is my firm conviction that if we bring about a successful boycott of foreign cloth, we shall have produced an atmosphere that would enable us to inaugurate civil disobedience on a scale that no Government can resist. I would, therefore, urge patience and determined concentration on *Swadeshi* upon those who are impatient to embark on mass civil disobedience.

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## THE MOPLAH OUTBREAK

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Mr. Gandhi addressed the following appeal to the Liberals on November 27, 1921:

Friends,—We are so preoccupied with our affairs that the events in Malabar hardly attract the attention they deserve. The ending of the trouble has become a matter of great urgency. It is one of simple humanity. Be the Moplahs ever so bad, they deserve to be treated as human beings. Their wives and children demand our sympathy. Nor are they all bad and yet there can be no doubt that many innocent men must have been adjudged guilty. Forcible conversions are terrible but Moplah bravery must command admiration. These Malabaris are not fighting for the love of it. They are fighting for what they consider as religion and in a manner they consider themselves religious. A vast majority of them have nothing personal to gain by continuing their defiance. Their sin is not of deliberation but of ignorance. If we permit the extermination of such brave people, it will be remembered against us and will be accounted as Indian cowardice.

I make to bold to say that had Mr. Yakub Hassan been allowed to go to Malabar, had I not been warned against entering Malabar, had Mussulmans of real interest been invited to go, the long-drawn-out agony could have been obviated, but it is not yet too late. The sword has been tried for three months and it has failed to answer its purpose. It has not bent the proud Moplah nor has it saved Hindus from his depredation and lust; the sword has merely prevented the Moplahs

from overrunning the whole of Madras Presidency. It has exhibited no protective power. I am sure you will not plead incapacity. It is true that police and military are not transferred subjects, but you cannot escape moral responsibility. You are supporting the policy of Government regarding Malabar.

Nor, I hope, will you retort by blaming the non-co-operators. They cannot admit any responsibility for the trouble at all unless all agitation is to be held blameworthy. I admit however that non-co-operators were not able to reach their message to the Moplah homes. That would be reason for more, not less, agitation, but I have not taken my pen to argue away the non-co-operators' blame.

I ask you to consider the broad humanities of the question, compel the Government to suspend hostilities, issue promise of freedom for past depredations upon the undertaking to surrender and to permit non-co-operators to enter Malabar to persuade Moplahs to surrender.

I know the last suggestion means giving of importance to non-co-operators. Surely you do not doubt their number. As to their influence, if you do, you should find other means of dealing with the trouble than that of extermination. I am merely concerned with the termination of the shameful inhumanity proceeding in Malabar with both Liberals and Non-Co-operators as helpless witnesses. I have chosen to address this letter not to the Government but to you, because the Government could not have taken the inhuman course of destruction without your moral support. I beseech you to give heed to my prayer as of a dear friend.

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## REPLY TO LORD RONALDSHAY

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The *hartal* organised by non-co-operators in connection with the Prince's visit was more or less successful in many places. It was alleged that by intimidation and otherwise, the *hartal* in Calcutta on the day of the Prince's landing in Bombay was phenomenally complete. The Bengal Chamber of Commerce and the Anglo-Indian Press took an alarmist view of the situation and expressed grave indignation against the passivity of the Government. With a view to suppress the activity of the Congress in this direction, Government resuscitated Part II of the Criminal Law Amendment Act which was then literally under a sentence of death. When volunteering was declared unlawful, Congress leaders took up the challenge and called on the people to disobey the order and seek imprisonment in their thousands. Men like Messrs C. R. Das in Calcutta, and Motilal Nehru in Allahabad, openly defied the order and canvassed volunteers in total disregard of legal consequences. They sought imprisonment and called on their countrymen to follow them to prison. The situation was grave. It was then that Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, Sir P. C. Ray and others thought that the time had come when they should step into the breach and try to bring about a reconciliation between Government and Non-Co-operators. With this view Pandit Madan Mohan and others interviewed leading Non-Co-operators and those in authority. Lord Ronaldshay, in his speech at the Legislative Council, referred to the gravity of the situation and defined the firm attitude of Government. Replying to His Excellency, Mr. Gandhi made the following statement on the 21st December, 1921 :

I have read Lord Ronaldshay's speech in the Bengal Legislative Council. Whilst I appreciate the note of conciliation about it, I cannot help saying that it is most misleading. I do not want to criticise those parts of the speech which lend themselves to criticism. I simply want to say that the present situation is entirely his own and the Viceroy's doing. In spite of my strong desire to avoid suspecting the Government of India and the Local Government of a wish to precipitate a conflict with the people, up to now all that I have heard

and read leads me to the conclusion that my suspicion is justified. Whilst I do not wish to deny the existence of some sort of pressure, even intimidation on the part of individuals, I do wish emphatically to deny that in connection with the phenomenal *hartal* on the 17th November in Calcutta, there was any intimidation, organised or initiated by, or on behalf of, the Local Congress or the Khilafat Committees. On the contrary, I am certain that the influence exerted by both these bodies was in the direction of avoiding all intimidation. Moral pressure there certainly was and will always be in all big-movements, but it must be clear to the simplest understanding that a complete *hartal* such as Calcutta witnessed on the 17th November would be an impossibility by mere intimidation. But assume that there was intimidation. Was there any reason for disbanding Volunteer Corps, prohibiting public meetings and enforcing laws which are under promise of repeal? Why has no attempt been made to prove a single case of intimidation? It grieves me to have to say the Governor of Bengal has brought in the discovery of sword or sword-sticks in one place in Calcutta to discredit large public organisations. Who intimidated the people into observing a complete *hartal* in Allahabad after all the leaders were arrested and in spite of the reported undue official pressure that was exercised upon shopkeepers and *ghariwallas* at that place? Again His Lordship says: "If we are to assume that this development means there is genuine desire to bring about improvement, there must be a favourable atmosphere. In other words, it will be generally agreed that there must be an essential preliminary to any possible conference. If responsible leaders of non-co-operation now come forward with definite assurance that this is the correct interpretation,

I should then say we were in sight of such a change of circumstances as would justify Government in reconsidering the position. But words must be backed by deeds. If I were satisfied only that there was general desire for the conference and that responsible non-co-operation leaders were prepared to take action, then I should be prepared to recommend my Government to take steps in consonance with the altered situation." This is highly misleading. If wherever words "non-co-operation leaders" occur, the word "Government" were put in and if the whole of the statement came from a non-co-operator, it would represent the correct situation. Non-co-operators have really to do nothing, for they have precipitated nothing. They are over-cautious. The disturbance in Bombay was allowed to override their keen desire to take up aggressive civil disobedience, but in the present circumstances the phrase "Civil Disobedience" is really a misnomer. What non-co-operators are doing to-day, I claim, every co-operator would do to-morrow under similar circumstances. When the Government of India or the Local Governments attempt to make our political existence or agitation, no matter how peaceful, an utter impossibility, may we not resist such attempt by every lawful means at our disposal? I cannot imagine anything more lawful or more natural than that we should continue our volunteer organisations purging them of every tendency to become violent and continue also to hold public meetings taking the consequences of such a step. Is it no proof of the law-abiding instinct of hundreds of young men and old men that they have meekly, without offering any defence and without complaining, accepted imprisonment for having dared to exercise their elementary rights in the face of Government persecution? And

so it is the Government which is to prove its genuine desire for a conference and an ultimate settlement. It is the Government which has to arrest the fatal course along which repression is taking it. It is the Government that is to prove to non-co-operators its *bona fides* before it can expect them to take part in any conference. When the Government does that, it will find that there is an absolutely peaceful atmosphere. Non-co-operation, when the Government is not resisting anything except violence, is a most harmless thing. There is really nothing for us to suspend. We cannot be expected, until there is actual settlement or guarantee of settlement, to ask schoolboys to return to Government schools or lawyers to resume practice or public men to become candidates for the Councils, or title-holders to ask for return of titles. In the nature of things, it is therefore clear that non-co-operators have to do nothing. Speaking personally I can certainly say that if there is a genuine desire for a conference, I would be the last person to advise precipitating aggressive civil disobedience, which certainly it is my intention to do immediately I am entirely satisfied that the people have understood the secret of non-violence; and let me say the last ten days' events have shown that the people seem clearly to understand its inestimable value. If then the Government recognises that non-co-operators mean business and intend to suffer limitlessly for the attainment of their goal, let the Government unconditionally retrace its steps, cancel the notifications about disbandment of volunteer organisations and prohibition of public meetings and release all those men in the different provinces who have been arrested and sentenced for so-called civil disobedience or for any other purpose given under the definition of non-co-operation but excluding acts of violence,



actual or intended. Let the Government come down with a heavy hand on every act of violence or incitement to it, but we must claim the right for all time of expressing our opinions freely and educating public opinion by every legitimate and non-violent means. It is therefore the Government who have really to undo the grave wrong they have perpetrated and they can have the conference they wish in a favourable atmosphere. Let me also say that so far as I am concerned, I want no conference to consider the ways and means of dealing with non-co-operation. The only conference that can at all avail at this stage is a conference called to deal with the causes of the present discontent, namely, the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and *Swaraj*. Any conference again which can usefully sit at the present stage, must be a conference that is really representative and not a conference to which only those whom the Government desire are invited.

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## WANTED A ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

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A Deputation headed by Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya waited on His Excellency the Viceroy at Calcutta, on December 21, and requested His Excellency to call a Round Table Conference of representatives of people of all shades of opinion with a view to bring about a final settlement. Lord Reading replied at some length and defined the attitude of the Government. He regretted that "It is impossible even to consider the convening of a conference if agitation in open and avowed defiance of law is meanwhile to be continued". Mr. Gandhi's refusal to call off the *hartal* in connection with H. R. H. the Prince of Wales' visit to Calcutta on December 24, 1921, apparently stiffened the attitude of the Government. Interviewed by the Associated Press, Mr. Gandhi made the following statement regarding the Viceroy's reply to the Deputation :

I must confess that I have read the Viceregal utterance; with deep pain. I was totally unprepared for what I must respectfully call his mischievous misrepresentation of the attitude of the Congress and the Khilafat organisations in connection with the visit of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Every resolution passed by either organisation and every speaker has laid the greatest stress upon the fact that there was no question of showing the slightest ill-will against the Prince or exposing him to any affront. The boycott was purely a question of principle and directed against what we have held to be unscrupulous methods of bureaucracy. I have always held, as I hold even now, that the Prince has been brought to India in order to strengthen the hold of the Civil Service Corporation which has brought India into a state of abject pauperism and political serfdom. If I am proved to be wrong in my supposition that the visit has that sinister meaning, I shall gladly apologise.

It is equally unfortunate for the Viceroy to say that the boycott of the welcome means an affront to the

British people. His Excellency does not realise what grievous wrong he is doing to his own people by confusing them with the British administrators in India. Does he wish India to infer that the British administrators here represent the British people and that agitation directed against their methods is an agitation against the British people? And if such is the Viceregal contention and if to conduct a vigorous and effective agitation against the methods of bureaucracy and to describe them in their true colours is an affront to the British people, then I am afraid I must plead guilty. But then I must also say in all humility, the Viceroy has entirely misread and misunderstood the great national awakening that is taking place in India. I repeat for the thousandth time that it is not hostile to any nation or any body of men but it is deliberately aimed at the system under which Government of India is being to-day conducted, and I promise that no threats and no enforcement of threats by the Viceroy or any body of men will strangle that agitation or send to rest that awakening.

I have said in my reply to Lord Ronaldshay's speech that we have not taken the offensive. We are not the aggressors, we have not got to stop any single activity. It is the Government that is to stop its aggravatingly offensive activity aimed not at violence but a lawful, disciplined, stern but absolutely non-violent agitation. It is for the Government of India and for it alone to bring about a peaceful atmosphere if it so desires. It has hurled a bomb-shell in the midst of material rendered inflammable by its own action and wonders that the material is still not inflammable enough to explode. The immediate issue is not now the redress of the three wrongs; the immediate issue is the right of holding public meetings.

and the right of forming associations for peaceful purpose. And in vindicating this right we are fighting the battle not merely on behalf of non-co-operators but we are fighting the battle for all schools of politics. It is the condition of any organic growth, and I see in the Viceregal pronouncement an insistence upon submission to a contrary doctrine which an erstwhile exponent of the law of liberty has seen fit to lay down upon finding himself in an atmosphere where there is little regard for law and order on the part of those very men who are supposed to be custodians of law and order. I have only to point to the unprovoked assaults being committed not in isolated cases, not in one place, but in Bengal, in the Punjab, in Delhi and in the United Provinces. I have no doubt that as repression goes on in its mad career, the reign of terrorism will overtake the whole of this unhappy land. But whether the campaign is conducted on civilised or uncivilised lines, so far as I can see, there is only one way open to non-co-operators, indeed I contend, even to the people of India. On this question of the right of holding public meetings and forming associations there can be no yielding. We have burnt our boats and we must sail onward till that primary right of human beings is vindicated.

Let me make my own position clear. I am most anxious for a settlement. I want a Round Table Conference. I want our position to be clearly known by everybody who wants to understand it. I impose no conditions but when conditions are imposed upon me prior to the holding of a conference, I must be allowed to examine those conditions, and if I find that they are suicidal, I must be excused if I don't accept them.

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## AHMEDABAD CONGRESS SPEECH

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The Ahmedabad Congress of December 1921 was above all a Gandhi Session. The President-Elect, Mr. C. R. Das, was in prison and so were many other leaders besides. Hakim Ajmal Khan was elected to take the chair and the proceedings were all in Hindi and Gujarati. Mr. Gandhi was invested with full dictatorial powers by the Congress and the central resolution of the session, which he moved, ran as follows :

"This Congress, whilst requiring the ordinary machinery to remain intact and to be utilised in the ordinary manner whenever feasible, hereby appoints, until further instructions, Mahatma Gandhi as the sole executive authority of the Congress and invests him with the full power to convene a special session of the Congress or of the All-India Congress Committee or the Working Committee and also with the power to appoint a successor in emergency.

This Congress hereby confers upon the said successor and all subsequent successors appointed in turn by their predecessors, all his aforesaid powers, provided that nothing in this resolution shall be deemed to authorise Mahatma Gandhi or any of the aforesaid successors to conclude any terms of peace with the Government of India or the British Government without the previous sanction of the All-India Congress Committee, to be finally ratified by the Congress specially convened for the purpose, and provided also that the present creed of the Congress shall in no case be altered by Mahatma Gandhi or his successor except with the leave of the Congress first obtained."

The following is the full text of Mr. Gandhi's speech :

I shall hope, if I can at all avoid it, not to take even the 30 minutes that Hakim Sahib has allotted to me. And I do not propose if I can help it to take all that time, because I feel that the resolution explains itself. If at the end of 15 months' incessant activity, you, the delegates assembled in this Congress, do not know your own minds, I am positive that I cannot possibly carry conviction to you even in a two hours' speech and, what is more, if I could carry conviction to you to-day because of my speech, I am afraid I would lose all faith in my

countrymen, because it would demonstrate their incapacity to observe things and events, it would demonstrate their incapacity to think coherently, because I submit there is absolutely nothing new in this resolution that we have not been doing all this time, that we have not been thinking all this time. There is absolutely nothing new in this resolution which is at all startling. Those of you who have followed the proceedings from month to month of the Working Committee of the All-India Congress Committee for two months or for three months and have studied the resolution can but come to one conclusion that this resolution is absolutely the natural result of the national activities during the past 15 months. And if you have at all followed the course, the downward course that the repression policy of the Government has been taking, you can only come to the conclusion that the Subjects Committee has come to through this resolution, that the only answer that a self-respecting nation can return to the Viceregal pronouncements and to the repression that is overtaking this land is the course mapped out in this resolution.

I am not going to take the time of our English-knowing friends over the religious subtleties of the pledge that the volunteers have to take. I wish to confine my remark on that subject to Hindustani. But I want this Assembly to understand the bearing of this resolution. This resolution means that we have outgrown the stage of helplessness and dependence upon anybody. This resolution means that the nation through its representatives is determined to have its own way without the assistance of any single human being on earth, except from God above. (*Applause.*) This resolution, whilst it shows the indomitable courage and the determination of

the nation to vindicate its rights and to be able to stare the world in the face, also says in all humility to the Government: "No matter what you do, no matter how you repress us, we shall one day wring the reluctant repentance from you and we warn you to think betime, take care what you are doing and see that you do not make 300 millions of India your eternal enemy."

This resolution, if the Government sincerely wants an open door, leaves the door wide open for the Government. If Moderate friends wish to rally round the standard of the Khilafat, round the standard of the liberties of the Punjab and therefore of India, if this Government is sincerely anxious to do justice and nothing but justice, if Lord Reading has really come to India to do justice and nothing less—and we want nothing more—if he is really anxious to do all those things, then I inform him from this platform, with God as my witness, with all the earnestness that I can command that he has got an open door in this resolution if he means well, but the door is closed in his face if he means ill. There is every chance for him to hold a Round Table Conference, but it must be a real Conference. If he wants a Conference at a table where only equals are to sit and where there is not to be a single beggar, then there is an open door and that door will always remain open, no matter how many people go to their graves, no matter what wild career this repression is to go through. So far as I am concerned, and if I can take the nation with me, I inform him again that the door will always remain wide open.

There is nothing in this resolution which any one who has modesty and humility need be ashamed of. This resolution is not an arrogant challenge to anybody, but

this is a challenge to an authority that is enthroned on arrogance. It is a challenge to the authority which disregards the considered opinion of millions of thinking human beings. It is an humble challenge and an irrevocable challenge to authority which, in order to save itself, wants to crush freedom of opinion, freedom of forming associations, the two lungs that are absolutely necessary for a man to breathe the oxygen of liberty. And if there is any authority in this country that wants to curb the freedom of speech and freedom of association, I want to be able to say, in your name, from this platform that that authority will perish and that authority will have to repent before an India that is steeled with high courage, noble purpose and determination till every man and woman who chose to call themselves Indians are blotted out of the earth. It combines courage and humility. God only knows if I could possibly have advised you to go to the Round Table Conference, if I could possibly have advised you not to undertake this resolution of civil disobedience, I would have done so. I am a man of peace. I believe in peace. But I do not want peace at any price. I do not want the peace that you find in stone. I do not want the peace that you find in grain. But I do want that peace which you find embedded in the human breast, which is exposed to the arrows of a whole world but which is protected from all harm by the Almighty Power of the Almighty God.

I do not want to take any more time of the Delegates, I do not want to say a word more. I do not want to insult your intelligence by saying a word more in connexion with this resolution in English.

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## THE INDEPENDENCE RESOLUTION

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Mr. Hasrat Mohani, President of the Moslem League, opposed Mr. Gandhi's resolution in the Congress and brought in various amendments which sought to lay down the object of the Congress as the attainment of complete independence, free from all foreign control. Mr. Gandhi opposed all the amendments and spoke as follows in defence of his own resolution :

Friends,—I have said only a few words (in Hindi) in connexion with the proposition of Mr. Hasrat Mohani. All I want to say to you in English is, that proposition and the manner, the levity, with which that proposition has been taken up by so many of you, or some of you, I hope, has grieved me. It has grieved me, because it shows a lack of responsibility. As responsible men and women, we should go back to the ways of Nagpur and Calcutta, and we should remember what we did only an hour ago. An hour ago we passed a resolution which actually contemplates a final settlement of the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs and transference of the power from the hands of the bureaucracy into the hands of the people by certain definite means. Are you going to rub the whole of that condition from the mind by raising a false issue and by throwing a bomb-shell in the midst of the Indian atmosphere. I hope that those of you who have voted for the previous resolution will think fifty times before taking up this resolution and voting for it with levity. We shall be charged by the thinking portion of the world that we did not know really where we are. Let us not be charged with that and let us understand our limitations. Let Hindus and Mussulmans have absolute

indissoluble unity. Who is here who can say to-day with confidence: "Yes, Hindu-Muslim unity has become and has become an indissoluble factor of Indian nationalism"? Who is here who can tell me that the Parsis and the Sikhs and the Christians and the Jews and the untouchables, about whom you heard this afternoon, who is here, I ask, who will tell me that those very people will not rise against any such idea?

Think, therefore, fifty times before you take a step which will redound not to your credit, not to your advantage, but which may cause irreparable injury. Let us first of all gather up our strength, let us first of all sound our own depths, but let us not go into waters whose depths we do not know and this proposition of Mr. Hasrat Mohani lands you to a depth unfathomable. I ask you in all confidence that you will reject that proposition if you believe in the proposition that you passed only an hour ago. The proposition now before you robs away the whole of the effect of the proposition that you passed a moment ago. Are creeds such simple things like clothes which a man can change at will and put on at will? Creeds are such for which people live for ages and ages. Are you going to change your creed which, with all deliberations and after great debates in Nagpur, you accepted. There was no limitation of one year when you accepted that creed. It is an extensive creed. It takes in all the weakest and the strongest and you will deny yourselves the privilege of clothing the weakest among yourselves with protection if you accept this limited creed of Mr. Hasrat Mohani, which does not admit the weakest of your brethren. I therefore ask you in all confidence to reject this proposition.

## THE BOMBAY CONFERENCE

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A conference of representatives of various shades of political opinion convened by Pandit Malaviya, Mr. Jinnah and others assembled at Bombay on the 14th January 1922, with Sir C. Sankaran Nair in the Chair. On the second day Sir Sankaran withdrew and Sir M. Visvesvaraya took up his place. Over two hundred leading men from different provinces attended. Mr. Gandhi was present throughout and though he refused to be officially connected with the resolutions, he took part in the debates and helped the conference in framing the resolutions which were also ratified by the Congress Working Committee. The following account of the conference by Mr. Gandhi himself is taken from *Young India* of January 1922 :

The conference was both a success and a failure. It was a success, in that it showed an earnest desire on the part of those who attended to secure a peaceful solution of the present trouble, and in that it brought under one roof people possessing divergent views. It was a failure in that, though certain resolutions have been adopted the conference did not leave on my mind the impression that those who assembled together as a whole, realised the gravity of the real issue. The mind of the conference seemed to be centred more on a round table conference than upon asserting the popular right of free speech, free association, and free Press which are more than round table conference. I had expected on the part of the independents to declare their firm attitude that no matter how much they might differ regarding the method of non-co-operation, the freedom of the people was a common heritage and that the assertion of that right was three-fourths of *Swaraj*; that therefore they would defend that right even with civil disobedience if need be.

However, as the attention of the conference could not be rivetted on that point but on a round table

conference, the discussion turned upon the essentials of such a conference.

My own position was clear. I would attend any conference as an individual without any conditions. My purpose as a reformer is to convert people to the view I hold to be right and therefore to see everybody who would care to listen to me. But when I was asked to mention the conditions necessary for an atmosphere favourable for a successful conference, I had to press some certain conditions. And I must own that the Resolutions Committee approached my viewpoint with the greatest sympathy and showed every anxiety to accommodate me. But side by side with this, I observed an admirable disposition on its part to consider the Government's difficulties. Indeed, the Government's case could not have been better presented if it had been directly and officially represented in the conference.

The result was a compromise. The withdrawal of notification and the discharge of prisoners coming under the notifications and of the *fatwa* prisoners, *i.e.*, the Ali Brothers and others who have been convicted in respect of the *fatwas* regarding military service, was common cause. The Committee saw the force of the suggestions that the distress warrants should be discharged, the fines imposed upon the Press, etc., should be refunded and that the prisoners convicted for non-violent or otherwise innocent activities under cover of the ordinary laws should be discharged upon the proof of their non-violence. For this purpose I had suggested the committee appointed by the conference. But on the Resolutions Committee showing that it would be difficult for the Government to accept such an uncontrolled recommendation, I agreed to the principle of arbitration

now imported in the resolution. The second compromise is regarding picketing. My suggestion was that in the event of the round table conference being decided upon, non-co-operation activities of a hostile nature should be suspended and that all picketing except *bona fide* peaceful picketing should also be suspended, pending result of the conference. As the implications of hostile activities appeared to me to be too dangerous to be acceptable, I hastily withdrew my own wording and gladly threw over even *bona fide* peaceful picketing, much though I regretted it. I felt that the friends interested in liquor picketing for the sake of temperance would not mind the temporary sacrifice.

I agreed too to advise the Working Committee to postpone general mass civil disobedience contemplated by the Congress to the 31st instant in order to enable the Committee and the Conference to enter into negotiations with the Government. This, I felt, was essential to show our *bona fides*. We could not take up new offensives whilst negotiations for a conference were being conducted by responsible men. I further undertook to advise the Committee, in the event of the proposed conference coming off, to stop all *hartals* pending the conference. This I hold to be inevitable. *Hartals* are a demonstration against bureaucracy. We cannot continue them if we are conferring with them for peace. Workers will bear in mind that as yet no activity of the Congress stops, save general civil disobedience. On the contrary, enlistment of volunteers and *Swadeshi* propaganda must continue without abatement. Liquor-shop picketing may continue where it is absolutely peaceful. It should certainly continue where notices unnecessarily prohibiting picketing have been issued. So

may picketing continue regarding schools or foreign cloth shops. But whilst all our activities should be zealously continued, there should be the greatest restraint exercised and every trace of violence or discourtesy avoided. When restraint and courtesy are added to strength, the latter becomes irresistible. Civil disobedience being an indefeasible right, the preparations for it will continue even if the conference comes off. And the preparations for civil disobedience consist in :

1. the enlistment of volunteers,
2. the propaganda of *Swadeshi*,
3. the removal of untouchability,
4. the training in non-violence in word, deed, and thought,
5. unity between diverse creeds and classes.

I hear that many are enrolled as volunteers in various parts of India, although they do not wear *khadi*, do not believe in complete non-violence or, if they are Hindus, do not believe in untouchability as a crime against humanity. I cannot too often warn the people that every deviation from our own rules retards our progress. It is the quality of our work which will please God and not quantity. Not all the lip Mussulmans and the lip Hindus will enter the Kingdom of Heaven. Islam is no stronger than the best Mussulman. Thousands of nominal followers of Hinduism believe their faith and discredit it. One true and perfect follower of Hinduism is enough to protect it for all time and against the whole world. Similarly, one true and perfect non-co-operator is any day better than a million non-co-operators so called. The best preparations for civil disobedience is to cultivate civility, that is truth and non-violence, amongst ourselves and our surroundings.

In order that all may approach the round table conference with perfect knowledge of the Congress demands, I laid all our cards on the table and reiterated the claims regarding the Khilafat, the Punjab, and *Swaraj*. Let me repeat them here :

(1) So far as I can write from memory, full restoration to the Turks of Constantinople, Adrianople, Anatolia including Smyrna and Thrace. Complete withdrawal of non-Muslim influence from Arabia, Mesopotamia, Palestine, and Syria and therefore withdrawal of British troops whether English or Indian from these territories.

(2) Full enforcement of the report of the Congress Sub-Committee and therefore the stopping of the pensions of Sir Michael O'Dwyer, General Dyer and other officers named in the report for dismissal.

(3) *Swaraj* means, in the event of the foregoing demands being granted, full dominion status. The scheme of such *Swaraj* should be framed by representatives duly elected in terms of the Congress Constitution. That means four anna franchise. Every Indian adult, male or female, paying four annas and signing the Congress creed, will be entitled to be placed on the electoral roll. These electors would elect delegates who would frame the *Swaraj* Constitution. This shall be given effect to without any change by the British Parliament.

If the Congress programme is so cut and dried, where is the necessity for a conference ? asks the critic. I hold that there is and there always will be.

The method of execution of the demands has to be considered. The Government may have a reasonable and a convincing answer on the claims. The Congressmen have fixed their minimum, but the fixing of the minimum means no more than confidence in the justice of one's cause.

It further means that there is no room for bargaining. There can, therefore, be no appeal to one's weakness or incapacity. The appeal can only be addressed to reason. If the Viceroy summons the conference, it means either that he recognises the justice of the claims or hopes to satisfy the Congressmen, among others, of the injustice thereof. He must be confident of the justice of his proposals for a rejection or reduction of the claim. That is my meaning of a meeting of equals who eliminate the idea of force and instantly shift their ground as they appreciate the injustice of their position. I assure His Excellency the Viceroy and everybody concerned that the Congressmen or non-co-operators are as reasonable beings as may be found on earth, or in India. They have every incentive to be so, for theirs is the duty of suffering as a result of rejection of any just offer.

I have heard it urged that on the Khilafat the Imperial Government is powerless. I should like to be convinced of this. In that case, and if the Imperial Government make common cause with the Mussulmans of India, I should be quite satisfied and take the chance with the Imperial Government's genuine assistance of convincing the other Powers of the justice of the Khilafat claim. And even when the claim is admitted, much requires to be discussed regarding the execution.

Similarly regarding the Punjab. The principle being granted, the details have to be settled. Legal difficulties have been urged about stopping the pensions to the dismissed officials. The reader may not know that Maulana Shaukat Ali's pension (I suppose he occupied the same status as Sir Michael O'Dwyer) was stopped without any inquiry or previous notice to him. I believe that service regulations do provide for removing



officers and officials from the pensions list on proof of gross neglect of duty or disloyal service. Anyway, let the Government prove a case for refusal to grant the Punjab demand, save the plea of the past services of these officials. I must refuse to weigh their service to the Empire against their disservice to India, assuming the possibility of two such things co-existing.

*Swaraj* scheme is undoubtedly a matter on which there will be as many minds as there are men and women. And it is eminently a thing to be debated in a conference. But here again there must be a clean mind and no mental reservations. India's freedom must be the supreme interest in everybody's mind. There should be no obstruction such as the pre-occupation of the British elector, or the indifference of the House of Commons, or the hostility of the House of Lords. No lover of India can possibly take into account these extraneous matters. The only question to consider will be: is India ready for what she wants? Or does she ask like a child for food she has no stomach for? That can be determined not by outsiders but by Indians themselves.

From that standpoint, I do consider the idea of the conference for devising a scheme of full *Swaraj* premature. India has not yet incontestably proved her strength. Her suffering is great indeed, but nothing and not prolonged enough for the object in view. She has to go through greater discipline. I was punctiliously careful not to make non-co-operators party to the conference resolutions, because we are still so weak. When India has evolved disciplined strength, I would knock myself at the Viceregal door for a conference and I know that the Viceroy will gladly embrace the

opportunity whether he be an eminent lawyer or a distinguished militarist. I do not approach directly because I am conscious of our weakness. But being humble I make it clear through Moderate or other friends that I would miss not a single opportunity of having honest conferences or consultations. And so I have not hesitated to advise non-co-operators thankfully to meet the Independents and place our services at their disposal to make such use of them as they may deem fit. And if the Viceroy or a party desires a conference, it would be foolish for non-co-operators not to respond. The case of non-co-operators depends for success on cultivation of public opinion and public support. They have no other force to back them. If they forfeit public opinion, they have lost the voice of God for the time being.

For the manner of preparing the scheme too, I have simply suggested what appears to me to be a most feasible method. The All-India Congress Committee has not considered it nor has the Working Committee. The adoption of the Congress franchise is my own suggestion. But what I have laid down as the guiding principle is really unassailable. The scheme of *Swaraj* is that scheme which popular representatives frame. What happens then to the experts in administration and others who may not be popularly elected? In my opinion, they also should attend and have the vote even, but they must necessarily be in a minority. They must expect to influence the majority by a constant appeal to the logic of facts. Given mutual trust and mutual respect, a round table conference cannot but result in a satisfactory and honourable peace.

The abrupt withdrawal of Sir Sankaran Nair was an unfortunate incident. In my opinion, he had nothing

to do with my, or later, with Mr. Jinnah's opinions. As speaker, especially, he was exempt from any implied or express identification with anybody's views. I cannot help feeling that Sir Sankaran erred in the conception of his duty as speaker. But as we progress towards democracy, we must be prepared even for such erroneous exercise of independence. I congratulate Sir Sankaran Nair upon his boldly exercising his independence which I have not hesitated to call cussedness in private conversation and upon the independence of the Committee in not suffering a nervous collapse but quietly electing Sir Visveswaraya and voting thanks to the retiring speaker for the services rendered.

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# BARDOLI CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

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## LETTER TO LORD READING

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While negotiations were going on between the representatives of the Malaviya Conference and H. E. the Viceroy, Mr. Gandhi addressed the following open letter to Lord Reading (February 1922). The letter was in effect an ultimatum and the efforts of the Conference ended in failure :

To His Excellency the Viceroy, Delhi.

Sir,—Bardoli is a small *tehsil* in the Surat district in the Bombay Presidency, having a population of about 87,000 all told.

On the 29th ultimo, it decided under the presidency of Mr. Vithalbai Patel to embark on mass civil disobedience, having proved its fitness for it in terms of the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee which met at Delhi during the first week of November last. But as I am perhaps chiefly responsible for Bardoli's decision, I owe it to Your Excellency and the Public to explain the situation under which the decision has been taken.

It was intended under the resolution of the All-India Congress Committee before referred to, to make Bardoli the first unit for mass civil disobedience in order to mark the national revolt against the Government for its consistently criminal refusal to appreciate India's resolve regarding the Khilafat, the Punjab, and *Swaraj*.

Then followed the unfortunate and regrettable riots on the 17th November last in Bombay resulting in the postponement of the step contemplated by Bardoli.

Meantime repression of a virulent type has taken place with the concurrence of the Government of India.

in Bengal, Assam, the United Provinces, the Punjab, the Province of Delhi and in a way in Bihar and Orissa and elsewhere. I know that you have objected to the use of the word "repression" for describing the action of the authorities in these Provinces. In my opinion, when an action is taken which is in excess of the requirements of the situation, it is undoubtedly repression. The looting of property, assaults on innocent people, brutal treatment of the prisoners in jails, including flogging, can in no sense be described as legal, civilized or in any way necessary. This official lawlessness cannot be described by any other term but lawless repression.

Intimidation by non-co-operators or their sympathisers to a certain extent in connection with *hartals* and picketing may be admitted, but in no case can it be held to justify the wholesale suppression of peaceful volunteering or equally peaceful public meetings under a distorted use of an extraordinary law which was passed in order to deal with activities which were manifestly violent both in intention and action, nor is it possible to designate as otherwise than repression action taken against innocent people under what has appeared to many of us as an illegal use of the ordinary law nor again can the administrative interference with the liberty of the Press under a law that is under promise of repeal be regarded as anything but repression.

The immediate task before the country therefore is to rescue from paralysis freedom of speech, freedom of association, and freedom of Press.

In the present mood of the Government of India and in the present unprepared state of the country in respect of complete control of the forces of violence, non-co-operators were unwilling to have anything to do with the Malaviya

Conference whose object was to induce Your Excellency to convene a Round Table Conference. But as I was anxious to avoid all avoidable suffering, I had no hesitation in advising the Working Committee of the Congress to accept the recommendations of that Conference.

Although, in my opinion, the terms were quite in keeping with your own requirements, as I understood them through your Calcutta speech and otherwise, you have summarily rejected the proposal.

In the circumstances, there is nothing before the country but to adopt some non-violent method for the enforcement of its demands, including the elementary rights of free speech, free association, and free Press. In my humble opinion, the recent events are a clear departure from the civilized policy laid down by Your Excellency at the time of the generous, manly and unconditional apology of the Ali Brothers, *viz.*, that the Government of India should not interfere with the activities of non-co-operation so long as they remained non-violent in word and deed. Had the Government policy remained neutral and allowed public opinion to ripen and have its full effect, it would have been possible to advise postponement of the adoption of civil disobedience of an aggressive type till the Congress had acquired fuller control over the forces of violence in the country and enforced greater discipline among the millions of its adherents. But the lawless repression (in a way unparalleled in the history of this unfortunate country) has made immediate adoption of mass civil disobedience an imperative duty. . . . .

But before the people of Bardoli actually commence mass civil disobedience, I would respectfully urge you as the head of the Government of India finally to revise

your policy and set free all the non-co-operating prisoners who are convicted or under trial for non-violent activities and declare in clear terms the policy of absolute non-interference with all non-violent activities in the country whether they be regarding the redress of the Khilafat or the Punjab wrongs, or *Swaraj* or any other purpose and even though they fall within the repressive sections of the Penal Code or the Criminal Procedure Code or other repressive laws, subject always to the condition of non-violence. I would further urge you to free the Press from all administrative control and restore all the fines and forfeitures recently imposed. In thus urging I am asking Your Excellency to do what is to-day being done in every country which is deemed to be under civilized Government. If you can see your way to make the necessary declaration within seven days of the date of publication of this manifesto, I shall be prepared to advise postponement of Civil Disobedience of an aggressive character till the imprisoned workers have after their discharge reviewed the whole situation and considered the position *de novo*. If the Government make the requested declaration, I shall regard it as an honest desire on its part to give effect to public opinion and shall therefore have no hesitation in advising the country to be engaged in further moulding the public opinion without violent restraint from either side and trust to its working to secure the fulfilment of its unalterable demands. Aggressive civil disobedience in that case will be taken up only when the Government departs from its policy of strictest neutrality or refuses to yield to the clearly expressed opinion of the vast majority of the people of India.

## REPLY TO THE GOVERNMENT OF INDIA

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The Government of India in a *communiqué*, published on the 6th February 1922 in reply to Mr. Gandhi's letter, repudiated his assertions and urged that the issue before the country was no longer between this or that programme of political advance, but between lawlessness with all its consequence on the one hand and the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of all civilised Governments. Mr. Gandhi in a further rejoinder issued on the very next day pointed out that the choice before the people was mass civil disobedience with all its undoubted dangers and lawless repression of the lawful activities of the people. The following is the full text of Mr. Gandhi's rejoinder :

I have very carefully read the Government's reply to my letter. I confess that I was totally unprepared for such an evasion of the realities of the case as the reply betrays.

I will take the very first repudiation. The reply says they (the Government) emphatically repudiate the statement that they have embarked on a policy of lawless repression and also the suggestion that the present campaign of civil disobedience has been forced on the non-co-operation party in order to secure the elementary rights of free association, free speech and free press. Even a cursory glance at my letter would show that whilst civil disobedience was authorised by the All-India Congress Committee meeting held on the 4th November at Delhi, it had not commenced. I have made it clear in my letter that the contemplated mass civil disobedience was indefinitely postponed on account of the regrettable events of the 17th November in Bombay. That decision was duly published and it is within the knowledge of the Government as also the Public that herculean efforts were being made to combat



the still lingering violent tendency amongst the people. It is also within the knowledge of the Government and the Public that a special form of pledge was devised to be signed by volunteers with the deliberate purpose of keeping out all but men of proved character. The primary object of these volunteers' associations was to inculcate amongst the masses the lessons of non-violence and to keep the peace at all non-co operation functions. Unfortunately the Government of India lost its head completely over the Bombay events and perhaps still more over the very complete *hartal* on the same date at Calcutta. I do not wish to deny that there might have been some intimidation practised in Calcutta, but it was not, I venture to submit, the fact of intimidation but the irritation caused by the completeness of the *hartal* that maddened the Government of India as also the Government of Bengal. Repression there was even before that time, but nothing was said or done in connection with it. But the repression that came in the wake of the notifications proclaiming the Criminal Law Amendment Act for the purpose of dealing with volunteers' associations and the Seditious Meetings Act for the purpose of dealing with public meetings held by non-co-operators, came upon the non-co-operation community as a bomb-shell.

I repeat then that these notifications and the arrests of Desbandu Chittaranjan Das and Maulana Abdul Kalam Asaid in Bengal, the arrest of Pandit Motilal Nehru and his co-workers in the U. P., and of Lala Lajput Rai and his party in the Punjab, made it absolutely necessary to take up, not yet aggressive civil disobedience, but only defensive civil disobedience, otherwise described as passive resistance. Even

Sir Hormusji Wadia was obliged to declare that, if the Bombay Government followed the precedents set by the Government of Bengal, U. P. and the Punjab, he would be bound to resist such notifications, that is, to enrol himself as a volunteer or to attend public meetings in defiance of Government order to the contrary. It is thus clear that a case has been completely made out for civil disobedience, unless the Government revised its policy which has resulted in the stopping of public meetings, public associations and the non-co-operation press in many parts of India.

Now for the statement that the Government have embarked on a policy of lawless repression instead of an ample expression of regret and apology for the barbarous deeds that have been committed by officers in the name of law and order. I regret to find in the Government reply a categorical denial of any lawless repression. In this connection I urge the Public and Government carefully to consider the following facts whose substance is beyond challenge: (1) Official shooting at Entally in Calcutta and the callous treatment even of a corpse. (2) The admitted brutality of the civil guards. (3) The forcible dispersal of a meeting at Dacca and the dragging of innocent men by their legs although they had given no offence or cause whatsoever. (4) Similar treatment of volunteers in Aligarh. (5) The conclusive (in my opinion) findings of the Committee presided over by Dr. Gokhul Chaud about the brutal and uncalled for assaults upon volunteers and the public in Lahore. (6) The wicked and inhuman treatment of volunteers and the public at Jullundur. (7) The shooting of a boy at Dehra Dun and the cruelly forcible dispersal of a public meeting of that place. (8) The looting admitted by the Bihar Government of villages by an

officer and his company without any permission whatsoever from any one, but, as stated by non-co-operators, at the invitation of a planter, assaults upon volunteers and the burning of Khaddar and papers belonging to the Congress at Sonapur. (9) The midnight searches and arrests in the Congress and Khilafat offices.

I have merely given a sample of the many infallible proofs of official lawlessness and barbarism. I have mentioned not even a tithe of what is happening all over the country. I wish to state, without fear of successful contradiction, that the scale on which this lawlessness had gone on in so many provinces of India puts into shade the inhumanities that were practised in the Punjab, if we except the crawling order and the massacre at Jallianwallabagh. It is my certain conviction that the massacre at Jallianwallabagh was a clean transaction compared to the unclean transactions described above and the pity of it is that, because people are not shot or butchered, the tortures through which hundreds of inoffensive men have gone through do not produce a sufficient effect to turn everybody's face against this Government.

But as if this warfare against innocence was not enough, the reins are being tightened in the jails. We know nothing of what is happening to-day in Karachi jail, to a solitary prisoner in the Sabarmati jail and to a batch in the Benares jail, all of whom are as innocent as I claim to be myself. Their crime consists in their constituting themselves the trustees of national honour and dignity. I am hoping that these proud and defiant spirits will not be sent into submission masquerading in the official garb. I deny the right of the authorities to insist on high-souled men appearing before them almost

naked or paying any obsequious respect to them by way of *salaaming* with open palms brought together, or reciting to the intonation of *Sarkar-ki-Jai*. No God-fearing man will do the latter even if he has to be kept standing in his stock for days and nights, as a Bengal schoolmaster is reported to have been for the sake of the dignity of human nature.

I trust that Lord Reading and his draftsmen do not know the facts that I have adduced or are being carried away by their belief in the infallibility of their employees. I refuse to believe in the statements which the public regards as God's truth. If there is the slightest exaggeration in the statements that I have made, I shall as publicly withdraw them and apologise for them as I am making them now, but, as it is, I undertake to prove the substance of every one of these charges if not the very letter and much more of them, before any impartial tribunal of men or women unconnected with the Government. I invite Pandit Malaviyaji and those who are performing the thankless task of securing a round table conference to form an impartial commission to investigate these charges by which I stand or fall.

It is the physical and brutal ill-treatment of humanity which has made many of my co-workers and myself impatient of life itself, and in the face of these things I don't wish to take public time by dealing in detail what I mean by abuse of the common law of the country, but I cannot help correcting the mis-impression which is likely to be created in connection with the Bombay disorders, disgraceful and deplorable as they were. Let it be remembered that, of the persons who lost their lives, over 45 were non-co-operators or their sympathisers, the hooligans; and of the 400 wounded,

to be absolutely on the safe side, over 350 were also derived from the same class. I do not complain; the co-operators, the non-co-operators and the friendly hooligans got what they deserved: they began the violence and they reaped the reward. Let it also not be forgotten that, with all deference to the Bombay Government, it was non-co-operators, ably assisted by independents and co-operators, who brought peace out of that chaos of the two days following the fateful 17th.

I must totally deny the imputation that the application of the Criminal Law Amendment Act was confined to associations, the majority of the members of which had habitually indulged in violence and intimidation. The prisons of India to-day hold some of the most inoffensive men and hardly any who are convicted under the law. Abundant proof can be produced in support of this statement, as also of the statement of the fact that almost wherever meetings have been broken up, there was actually no risk of violence.

The Government of India deny that the Viceroy has laid down upon the apology of the Ali Brothers the civilised policy of non-interference with the non-violent activities of non-co-operators. I am extremely sorry for this repudiation. The very part of the *communiqué* reproduced in the reply is in my opinion sufficient proof that the Government did not intend to interfere with such activities. The Government did not wish to be inferred that speeches promoting disaffection of a less violent character were not an offence against the law. I have never stated that breach of any law was not to be an offence against it, but I have stated, as I repeat now, that it was not the intention of the

Government then to prosecute for non-violent activities although they might amount to a technical breach of the law.

As to the conditions of the Conference, the Government reply evidently omits to mention the two words "and otherwise" after the words "Calcutta speech" in my letter. I repeat that the terms "I would gather from the Calcutta speech and otherwise" were nearly the same that were mentioned in the resolutions of the Malaviya Conference. What are called the unlawful activities of the N. C. O. party, being a reply to the notifications of the Government, would have ceased automatically with the withdrawal of those notifications, because the formation of volunteer corps and public meetings would not be unlawful activities after the withdrawal of the offending notification. Even while the negotiations were going on in Calcutta, the discharge of Fatwa prisoners was asked for, and I can only repeat what I have said elsewhere that, if it is disloyal to say that military service under the existing system of Government is a sin against God and humanity, I fear that such disloyalty must continue.

The Government *communique* does me a cruel wrong imputing to me a desire that the proposed round table conference should be called merely to register my decrees. I did state, in order to avoid any misunderstanding of the Congress demands, as I felt I was in duty bound, in as clear terms as possible. No Congressman could approach any conference without making his position clear. I accepted the ordinary courtesy of not considering me or any Congressmen to be impervious to reason or argument. It is open to anybody to convince me that the demands of the Congress regarding the Khilafat, the Punjab and *Swaraj* are wrong or unreasonable.

and I would certainly retrace my steps and, so far as I am concerned, rectify the wrong. The Government of India know that such has been always my attitude.

The *communiqué*, strangely enough, says that the demands set forth in my manifesto are even larger than those of the Working Committee. I claim that they fall far below the demands of the Working Committee, for what I now ask against the total suspension of civil disobedience of an aggressive character is merely the stoppage of ruthless repression, the release of prisoners convicted under it and a clear declaration of policy. The demands of the Working Committee included a round table conference. In my manifesto I have not asked for a round table conference at all. It is true that this wanting of a round table conference does not proceed from any expediency, but it is a confession of present weakness. I freely recognise that unless India becomes saturated with the spirit of non-violence and generates disciplined strength that can only come from non-violence, she cannot enforce her demands and it is for that reason that I now consider that the first thing for the people to do is to secure a reversal of this mad repression and then to concentrate upon more complete organisation and more construction. And here again the *communiqué* does me an injustice by merely stating that civil disobedience of an aggressive character will be postponed until the opportunity is given to the imprisoned leaders of reviewing the whole situation after their discharge and by conveniently omitting to mention the following conclusion of my letter : " If the Government make the requested declaration, I shall regard it as an honest desire on its part to give effect to public opinion and shall therefore have no hesitation in advising

the country to be engaged in further moulding public opinion without violent restraint from either side and trust to its working to secure the fulfilment of its unalterable demands. Aggressive civil disobedience in that case will be taken up only when the Government departs from its policy of strictest neutrality or refuse to yield to the clearly expressed opinion of the vast majority of the people of India."

I venture to claim extreme reasonableness and moderation for the above presentation of the case. The alternative before the people, therefore, is not, as the *communique* concludes, between "lawlessness with all its disastrous consequences on the one hand and on the other the maintenance of those principles which lie at the root of all civilised Governments' mass civil disobedience, it adds, is fraught with such danger to the State that it must be met with "sternness and severity". The choice before the people is mass civil disobedience with all its undoubted dangers and lawless repression of the lawful activities of the people. I hold that it is impossible for any body of self-respecting men for fear of unknown dangers to sit still and do nothing effective when looting of property and assaulting of innocent men are going on all over the country in the name of law and order.

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## THE CRIME OF CHAURI CHAURA

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While Mr. Gandhi was about to inaugurate mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, there occurred a terrible tragedy at Chauri Chaura on the 14th February when an infuriated mob, including some volunteers also, attacked the *thana*, burnt down the building and beat to death no less than twenty-two policemen. Some constables and chaukidars were literally burnt to death and the whole place was under mobocracy. Mr. Gandhi took this occurrence as a third warning to suspend civil disobedience and the Bardoli programme was accordingly given up. On the 11th the Working Committee met at Bardoli and resolved to suspend all offensive action including even picketing and processions. The country was to confine itself to the constructive programme of Khaddar manufacture. The Working Committee advised the stoppage of all activities designed to court imprisonment. Commenting on the tragedy of Chauri Chaura and the Bardoli decisions, Mr. Gandhi wrote in *Young India* of February 6th, 1922 :

God has been abundantly kind to me. He has warned me the third time that there is not as yet in India that truthful and non-violent atmosphere which and which alone can justify mass disobedience which can be at all described as civil which means gentle, truthful, humble, knowing, wilful yet loving, never criminal and hateful.

He warned me in 1919 when the Rowlatt Act agitation was started. Ahmedabad, Viramgam, and Kheda erred ; Amritsar and Kasur erred. I retraced my steps, called it a Himalayan miscalculation, humbled myself before God and man, and stopped not merely mass civil disobedience but even my own which, I knew, was intended to be civil and non-violent.

The next time it was through the events of Bombay that God gave a terrific warning. He made me eye-witness of the deeds of the Bombay mob on the

17th November. The mob acted in the interest of non-co-operation. I announced my intention to stop the mass civil disobedience which was to be immediately started in Bardoli. The humiliation was greater than in 1919. But it did me good. I am sure that the Nation gained by the stopping. India stood for truth and non-violence by the suspension.

But the bitterest humiliation was still to come. Madras did give the warning, but I heeded it not. But God spoke clearly through Chauri Chaura. I understood that the constables who were so brutally hacked to death had given much provocation. They had even gone back upon the word just given by the Inspector that they would not be molested, but when the procession had passed, the stragglers were interfered with and abused by the constables. The former cried out for help. The mob returned. The constables opened fire. The little ammunition they had was exhausted and they retired to the *thana* for safety. The mob, my informant tells me, therefore set fire to the *thana*. The self-imprisoned constables had to come out for dear life and as they did so, they were backed to pieces and the mangled remains were thrown into the raging flames.

It is claimed that no non-co-operation volunteer had a hand in the brutality and that the mob had not only the immediate provocation but they had also general knowledge of the high-handed tyranny of the police in that district. No provocation can possibly justify the brutal murder of men who had been rendered defenceless and who had virtually thrown themselves on the mercy of the mob. And when an Indian claims to be non-violent and hopes to mount the throne of liberty through non-violent means, mob-violence even in answer to grave

provocation is a bad augury. Suppose the non-violent disobedience of Bardoli was permitted by God to succeed, the Government had abdicated in favour of the victors of Bardoli, who would control the unruly element that must be expected to perpetrate inhumanity upon due provocation? Non-violent attainment of Self-Government presupposes a non-violent control over the violent elements in the country. Non-violent non-co-operators can only succeed when they have succeeded in attaining control over the hooligans of India, in other words, when the latter also have learnt patriotically or religiously to refrain from their violent activities, at least whilst the campaign of non-co-operation is going on. The tragedy at Chaura, therefore, roused me thoroughly.

But what about your manifesto to the Viceroy and your rejoinder to his reply? spoke the voice of Satan. It was the bitterest cup of humiliation to drink. Surely it is cowardly to withdraw the next day after pompous threat to the Government and promises to the people of Bardoli. Thus Satan's invitation was to deny Truth and therefore Religion, to deny God Himself. I put my doubts and troubles before the Working Committee and other associates whom I found near me. They did not at all agree with me at first. Some of them probably do not even now agree with me. But never has a man been blessed, perhaps, with colleagues and associates so considerate and forgiving as I have. They understood my difficulty and patiently followed my argument. The drastic reversal of practically the whole of the aggressive programme may be politically unsound and unwise, but there is no doubt that it is religiously sound, and I venture to assure the doubters that the country will have gained by my humiliation and confession of error.

The only virtue I want to claim is Truth and Non-violence. I lay no claim to superhuman powers. I want none. I wear the same corruptible flesh that the weakest of my fellow-beings wears and am therefore as liable to err as any. My services have many limitations, but God has up to now blessed them in spite of the imperfections.

For confession of error is like a broom that sweeps away dirt and leaves the surface cleaner than before. I feel stronger for my confession. And the cause must prosper for the retracing. Never has man reached his destination by persistence in deviation from the straight path.

It has been urged that Chauri Chaura cannot affect Bardoli. There is danger, it is argued, only if Bardoli is weak enough to be swayed by Chauri Chaura and is betrayed into violence. I have no doubt whatsoever on that account. The people of Bardoli are in my opinion the most peaceful in India. But Bardoli is but a speck on the map of India. Its effort cannot succeed unless there is perfect co-operation from the other parts. Bardoli's disobedience will be civil only when the other parts of India remain non-violent. Just as the addition of a grain of arsenic to a pot of milk renders it unfit as food, so will the civility of Bardoli prove unacceptable by the addition of the deadly poison from Chauri Chaura. The latter represents India as much as Bardoli.

Chauri Chaura is after all an aggravated symptom. I have never imagined that there has been no violence—mental or physical—in the places where repression is going on. Only I have believed, I still believe and the pages of *Young India* amply prove that the repression is out of all proportion to the insignificant popular violence in the areas of repression. The determined holding of

meetings in prohibited areas I do not call violence. The violence I am referring to is the throwing of brickbats or intimidation and coercion practised in stray cases. As a matter of fact in civil disobedience there should be no excitement. Civil disobedience is a preparation for mute suffering. Its effect is marvellous though unperceived and gentle. But I regarded certain amount of excitement as inevitable, certain amount of unintended violence even pardonable, i.e., I did not consider civil disobedience impossible in somewhat imperfect conditions. Under perfect conditions disobedience when civil is hardly felt. But the present movement is admittedly a dangerous experiment under fairly adverse conditions.

The tragedy of Chauri Chaura is really the index finger. It shows the way India may easily go if drastic precautions be not taken. If we are not to evolve violence out of non-violence, it is quite clear that we must hastily retrace our steps and re-establish an atmosphere of peace, re-arrange our programme and not think of starting mass civil disobedience, until we are sure of peace being started and in spite of Government provocation. We must be sure of unauthorised portions not starting mass civil disobedience.

As it is, the Congress organisation is still imperfect and its instructions are still perfunctorily carried out. We have not established Congress Committees in every one of the villages. Where we have, they are not perfectly amenable to our instructions. We have not probably more than one crore of members on the roll. We are in the middle of February, yet not many have paid the annual four annas subscription for the current year. Volunteers are indifferently enrolled. They do not conform to all the conditions of their pledge. They do not even wear

hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar*. All the Hindu volunteers have not yet purged themselves of the sin of untouchability. All are not free from the taint of violence. Not by their imprisonment are we going to win *Swaraj* or serve the holy cause of the Khilafat or attain the ability to stop payment to faithless servants. Some of us err in spite of ourselves. But some others among us sin wilfully. They join volunteer corps well knowing that they are not and do not intend to remain non-violent. We are thus untruthful even as we hold the Government to be untruthful. We dare not enter the Kingdom of Liberty with mere lip homage to Truth and Non-violence.

Suspension of mass civil disobedience, and subsidence of excitement, are necessary for further progress, indeed, indispensable to prevent further retrogression. I hope, therefore, that by suspension every Congress man or woman will not only feel disappointed but he or she will feel relieved of the burden of unreality and of national sin.

Let the opponent glory in our humiliation or so called defeat. It is better to be charged with cowardice and weakness than to be guilty of our oath and sin against God. It is million times better to appear untrue before the world than to be untrue to ourselves.

And so for me the suppression of mass civil disobedience and other minor activities that were calculated to keep up excitement is not enough penance for my having been the instrument, howsoever involuntary, of the brutal violence by the people at Chauri Chaura.

I must undergo personal cleansing. I must become a fitter instrument able to register the slightest variation in the moral atmosphere about me. My prayers must have much deeper truth and humility about them than they evidence. And for me there is nothing so helpful

and cleansing as a fast accompanied by the necessary mental co-operation.

I know that the mental attitude is everything. Just as a prayer may be merely a mechanical intonation as of a bird, so may a fast be a mere mechanical torture of the flesh. Such mechanical contrivances are valueless for the purpose intended. Again just as a mechanical chant may result in the modulation of voice, a mechanical fast may result in purifying the body. Neither will touch the soul within.

But a fast undertaken for fuller self-expression, for attainment of the spirit's supremacy over the flesh, is a most powerful factor in one's evolution. After deep consideration, therefore, I am imposing on myself a five days' continuous fast permitting myself water. It commenced on Sunday evening, it ends on Friday evening. This is the least I must do.

I have taken into consideration the All-India Congress Committee meeting in front of me. I have in mind the anxious pain even the day's fast will cause many friends; but I can no longer postpone the penance nor lessen it.

I urge co-workers not to copy my example. The motive in their case will be lacking. They are not the originators of civil disobedience. I am in the unhappy position of a surgeon proved skillless to deal with an admittedly dangerous case. I must either abdicate or acquire greater skill. Whilst the personal penance is not only necessary but obligatory on me, the exemplary self-restraint prescribed by the Working Committee is surely sufficient penance for every one else. It is no small penance and if sincerely carried out, it can become infinitely more real and better than fasting. What can be richer and more fruitful than a greater fulfilment of

the vow of non-violence in thought, word and deed or the spread of that spirit? It will be more than food for me during the week to observe that comrades are all silently and without idle discussion engaged in fulfilling the constructive programme sketched by the Working Committee, in enlisting Congress members after making sure that they understand the Congress creed of truth and non-violence for the attainment of *Swaraj*, in daily and religiously spinning for a fixed time, in introducing the wheel of prosperity and freedom in every home, in visiting 'untouchable' homes and finding out their wants, in inducing national schools to receive 'untouchable' children, in organising social service specially designed to find a common platform for every variety of man and woman, and in visiting the homes which the drink curse is desolating, in establishing real *Panchayats* and in organising national schools on a proper footing. The workers will be better engaged in these activities than in fasting. I hope, therefore, that no one will join me in fasting, either through false sympathy or an ignorant conception of the spiritual value of fasting.

All fasting and all penance must as far as possible be secret. But my fasting is both a penance and a punishment, and a punishment has to be public. It is penance for me and punishment for those whom I try to serve, for whom I love to live and would equally love to die. They have unintentionally sinned against the laws of the Congress though they were sympathisers if not actually connected with it. Probably they hacked the constables their countrymen and fellow-beings with my name on their lips. The only way love punishes is by suffering. I cannot even wish them to be arrested. But I would let them know that I would suffer for their breach of the



Congress creed. I would advise those who feel guilty and repentant to hand themselves voluntarily to the Government for punishment and make a clean confession. I hope that the workers in the Gorakhpur district will leave no stone unturned to find out the evil doers and urge them to deliver themselves into custody. But whether the murderers accept my advice or not, I would like them to know that they have seriously interfered with *Swaraj* operations, that in being the cause of the postponement of the movement in Bardoli, they have injured the very cause they probably intended to serve. I would like them to know, too, that this movement is not a cloak or a preparation for violence. I would, at any rate, suffer every humiliation, every torture, absolute ostracism and death itself to prevent the movement from becoming violent or a precursor of violence. I make my penance public also because I am now denying myself the opportunity of sharing their lot with the prisoners. The immediate issue has again shifted, we can no longer press for the withdrawal of notification, or discharge of prisoners. They and we must suffer for the crime of Chauri Chaura. The incident proves, whether we wish it or no, the unity of life. All, including even the administrators, must suffer. Chauri Chaura must stiffen the Government, must still further corrupt the police, and the reprisals that will follow must further demoralise the people. The suspension and the penance will take us back to the position we occupied before the tragedy. By strict discipline and purification we regain the moral confidence required for demanding the withdrawal of notifications and the discharge of prisoners.

If we learn the full lesson of the tragedy, we can turn the curse into a blessing. By becoming truthful and non-violent, both in spirit and deed, and by making the *swadeshi*, i.e., the *khaddar* programme complete, we can establish full *Swaraj* and redress the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs without a single person having to offer civil disobedience.

## IN DEFENCE OF THE BARDOLI DECISIONS

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The suspension of mass civil disobedience in Bardoli, which was recommended by the Working Committee at the instance of Mr. Gandhi, was resented by some of his colleagues and followers. In reply to correspondents who attacked him, he wrote as follows in *Young India* of February 23rd, 1922 :

A friend from Lahore without giving his name sends me the following thundering note :

On Tuesday the 14th I read the *Tribune* and the resolutions therein passed at the emergency meeting of the All-India Congress Working Committee. On Monday when I came from my office I heard a flying rumour that Mahatmaji had postponed the date of the mass civil disobedience, but at that time I thought the news devoid of foundation. After a short time a friend of mine hawked me at my house and we went to bazaar. His face was somewhat sadder than usual. I enquired of him the reason of his sadness. He said he was utterly disgusted and so gave up the idea of following this movement. Mahatmaji was going to give up the lead of this movement and at the same time he had advised all the Provincial Congress Committees not to enrol any more volunteers. No picketing propaganda should be undertaken as long as the special session of the All-India Congress Committee had not confirmed what to do further.

The people are of this opinion that you have turned your face and become fickle-minded. They will co-operate with the Government without any hesitation and join the ceremony of His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales. Some say that they will not observe *hartal* and will accord a hearty reception at Lahore.

Some merchants are under the impression that you have removed all the restrictions from all liquor-shops and *videshi* cloth.

Truly speaking, each and every one in Lahore city is holding meeting in the bazaar as well as in the house, and you will forgive me if I will say boldly that they are condemning the action of the All-India Congress Committee.

I now for my sake ask you these questions :

(1) Will you now give up the lead of this movement ? If so, why ?

(2) Will you be good enough to let me know why you have given such instructions to all Provincial Congress Committees ? Have you given an opportunity to Pandit Malaviya for a Round

Table Conference for a settlement, or has Pandit Malaviya agreed to embrace your movement in case the Government has not turned true to its words?

(3) Grant a compromise is arranged and the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs are redressed and in the case of *Swaraj* the Government may only extend the reforms, will you be satisfied with that or continue your activities till you have got the full dominion status?

(4) Suppose no decision is arrived at. Will Pandit Malaviya and all others who are connected with this Conference, come to your side or will their fate remain in the balance just as now?

(5) In case no decision is arrived at, will you give up the idea of civil disobedience if there is danger of violence.

(6) Is your intention now to disband the present volunteer corps and enlist those who know spinning and wear hand-spun and hand-woven *khaddar*?

(7) Suppose violence has made appearance when you have started your mass civil disobedience, what will you do at that time? Will you stop your activities at the very moment?

There is much more criticism in this letter than I have reproduced. The writer tells me that the people are so disgusted that they now threaten to become co-operators and are of opinion that I have sold Lala Lajpat Rai, Deshabandhu Chitta Ranjan Das, Pandit Motilal Nehru, the Ali Brothers and others, and tells me that if I give up the leadership there are thousands who will leave this world by committing suicide. I may assure the citizens of Lahore in particular and Punjabis in general that I do not believe what is said of them. I used to receive such letters even during the Martial Law days because of the suspension of civil disobedience, but I discounted all the news and on my reaching the Punjab in October, I found that I was right in my analysis of the Punjab mind and I discovered that there was no one to challenge the propriety of my act. I feel still more confident of the correctness of the decision of the Working Committee, but if it is found that the country repudiates my action I shall not mind it. I can but do my duty. A leader is useless when he acts against

the promptings of his own conscience, surrounded as he must be by people holding all kinds of views. He will drift like an anchorless ship if he has not the inner voice to hold him firm and guide him. Above all, I can easily put up with the denial of the world, but any denial by me of my God is unthinkable, and if I did not give at this critical period of the struggle the advice that I have, I would be denying both God and Truth. The telegrams and letters I am receiving from all parts of the country thanking me for my decision—telegrams from both non-co-operators and co-operators—confirm my belief that the country appreciates the decision and that the Lahore writer has given undue prominence to some heated bazaar talk which was bound to take place after the Bardoli decision which all of a sudden disturbed all previous calculations. I can understand the effect of the first shock, but I am also sure that when the people begin to analyse the implications of non-violence, they will come to no other conclusion than that of the Working Committee.

And now for the questions of the correspondent :

(1) I am not likely to give up the lead of the movement unless I have a clear indication that the people want me to. One method of giving that indication is an adverse vote of the Working Committee or the All-India Congress Committee.

(2) I assure the public that "Pandit Malaviyaji had absolutely no hand in shaping my decision." I have often yielded to Panditji, and it is always a pleasure for me to yield to him whenever I can and always painful to differ from one who has an unrivalled record of public service and who is sacrifice personified. But so far as the decision of suspension is concerned, I arrived at it on my reading the detailed report of the Chauri Chaura tragedy in the

*Chronicle.* It was in Bardoli that telegrams were sent convening the Working Committee meeting and it was in Bardoli that I sent a letter to the members of the Working Committee advising them of my desire to suspend civil disobedience. I went thereafter to Bombay at the instance of Panditji who, together with the other friends of the Malaviya Conference, undoubtedly wished to plead with me for a suspension and who were agreeably surprised when I told them that so far as I was concerned, my mind was made up, but that I had kept it open so that I could discuss the point thoroughly with the members of the Working Committee. The suspension has no reference to a round table conference or to any settlement. In my opinion, a round table conference is bound to prove fruitless. It requires a much stronger Viceroy than Lord Reading has proved to be to perceive the situation in the country and then to describe it correctly. I certainly feel that Pandit Malaviyaji has already come into the movement. It is not possible for him to keep away from the Congress or from danger, but the Bardoli decision was arrived at purely on its merits and I could not have been shaken from the original purpose had I not been unnerved by the Chauri Chaura tragedy which was the last straw.

(3) Nothing short of full Dominion Status is likely to satisfy me personally and nothing short of complete severance will satisfy me if the Khilafat and the Punjab wrongs remain unredressed, but the exact form does not depend upon me. I have no clear-cut scheme. It has to be evolved by the people's representatives.

(4) At the present moment there is no question of a settlement. Therefore, the question as to what Panditji and all others will do is premature if not irrelevant. But assuming that Panditji holds any conference and that

its resolutions are ignored by the Government, Panditji and others will act as all self-respecting men do in such circumstances.

(5) I can never give up the idea of civil disobedience, no matter what danger there is of violence, but I shall certainly give up the idea of starting mass civil disobedience so long as there is certain danger of violence. Individual civil disobedience stands on a different footing.

(6) There is no question of disbanding any Volunteer Corps, but the names of those who do not conform to the Congress pledge have certainly to be removed from the list if we are to be honest.

(7) If we have understood the essential parts of non-violence, we can but come to one conclusion, that any eruption of widespread violence—and I call the Chauri Chaura tragedy widespread for the purpose—automatically stops mass civil disobedience. That many other parts of the country have nobly responded to the spirit of non-violence is good, but it is not good enough to continue mass civil disobedience even as a most peaceful meeting is disturbed if one man obstructs or commits violence. Mass civil disobedience for becoming successful requires a non-violent environment. The reason for restricting it to one single small area is to prevent violence elsewhere. It therefore means that mass civil disobedience in a particular area is possible when the other areas passively co-operate by remaining non-violent.

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## THE DELHI RESOLUTIONS

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The All-India Congress Committee met at Delhi on the 20th February and passed resolutions with important modifications on the Bardoli decisions of the Working Committee. Mr. Gandhi explains in the following article in *Young India* of March 2, 1922 how the Bardoli programme came to be modified :

The session just past of the All-India Congress Committee\* was in some respects more memorable than the Congress. There is so much undercurrent of violence, both conscious and unconscious, that I was actually and literally praying for a disastrous defeat. I have always been in a minority. The reader does not know that in South Africa I started with practical unanimity, reached a minority of sixty-four and even sixteen and went up again to a huge majority. The best and the most solid work was done in the wilderness of minority.

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\* The following resolutions were passed on the 25th February at the session of the All-India Congress Committee held at Delhi :

The All-India Congress Committee having carefully considered the resolutions passed by the Working Committee at its meeting held at Bardoli on the 11th and 12th instant, confirms the said resolutions with the modifications noted therein and further resolves that individual civil disobedience whether of a defensive or aggressive character may be commenced in respect of particular places or particular laws at the instance of and upon permission being granted therefor by the respective Provincial Committee provided that such civil disobedience shall not be permitted unless all the conditions laid down by the Congress or the All-India Congress Committee or the Working Committee are strictly fulfilled.

Reports having been received from various quarters that picketing regarding foreign cloth is as necessary as liquor-picketing, the All-India Congress Committee authorises such picketing of a *bona fide* character on the same terms as liquor-picketing mentioned in the Bardoli resolutions.

The All-India Congress Committee wishes it to be understood that the resolutions of the Working Committee do not mean any

I know that the only thing that the Government dread is this huge majority I seem to command. They little know that I dread it even more than they. I have become literally sick of the adoration of the unthinking multitude. I would feel certain of my ground if I was spat upon by them. Then there would be no need for confession of Himalayan and other miscalculations, no retracing, no re-arranging.

But it was not to be.

A friend warned me against exploiting my dictatorship. He little knew that I had never once used it, if only because the legal occasion had not yet arisen for its use. The 'dictatorship' accrues to me only when the ordinary Congress machinery is rendered unworkable by the Government.

Far from my consciously or unconsciously exploiting my 'dictatorship', I have begun to wonder if I am not unconsciously allowing myself to be 'exploited'.

abandonment of the original Congress programme of non-cooperation or permanent abandonment of mass civil disobedience but considers that an atmosphere of necessary mass non-violence can be established by the workers concentrating upon the constructive programme framed by the Working Committee at Bardoli.

The All-India Congress Committee holds civil disobedience to be the right and duty of the people to be exercised and performed whenever the State opposes the declared will of the people.

*Note:* Individual civil disobedience is disobedience of orders or laws by a single individual or an ascertained number or group of individuals. Therefore a prohibited public meeting where admission is regulated by tickets and to which no unauthorised admission is allowed, is an instance of individual civil disobedience, whereas a prohibited meeting to which the general public is admitted without any restriction is an instance of mass civil disobedience. Such civil disobedience is defensive when a prohibited public meeting is held for conducting a normal activity although it may result in arrest. It would be aggressive if it is held not for any normal activity but merely for the purpose of courting arrest and imprisonment.



I confess that I have a dread of it such as I never had before. My only safety lies in my shamelessness. I have warned my friends of the Committee that I am incorrigible. I shall continue to confess blunders each time the people commit them. The only tyrant I accept in this world is the 'still small voice' within. And even though I have to face the prospect of a minority of one, I humbly believe I have the courage to be in such a hopeless minority. That to me is the only truthful position.

But I am a sadder and, I hope, a wiser man to-day. I see that our non-violence is skin-deep. We are burning with indignation. The Government is feeding it by its insensate acts.       \*       \*       \*

This non-violence therefore seems to be due merely to our helplessness. It almost appears as if we are nursing in our bosoms the desire to take revenge the first time we get the opportunity.

Can true voluntary non-violence come out of this seeming forced non-violence of the weak? Is it not a futile experiment I am conducting? What if, when the fury bursts, not a man, woman, or child is safe and every man's hand is raised against his fellow-being? Of what avail is it then if I fast myself to death in the event of such a catastrophe coming to pass?

What is the alternative? To lie and say that what I know to be evil, is good? To say that true and voluntary co-operation will come out of false and forced co-operation is to say that light will result from darkness.

Co-operation with the Government is as much a weakness and a sin as alliance with suspended violence.

The difficulty is almost insurmountable. Hence with the growing knowledge of the fact that this non-violence

is merely superficial, I must continually make mistakes and retrace, even as a man wading his way through a tractless forest must continually stop, retrace, stumble, be hurt and even bleed.

I was prepared for a certain amount of depression, disappointment and resentment, but I confess I was totally unprepared for the hurricane of opposition. It became clear to me that the workers were in no mood to do any serious work of construction. The constructive programme lent no enchantment. They were not a social reform association. They could not wrest power from the Government by such humdrum reform work. They wanted to deliver 'non-violent' blows! All this appeared so thoroughly unreal. They would not stop to think that even if they could defeat the Government by a childish display of rage they could not conduct the Government of the country for a single day without serious and laborious organisation and construction.

We must not go to gaol, as Mahomed Ali would say, 'on a false issue'. It is not any imprisonment that will lead to *Swaraj*. It is not every disobedience that will fire us with the spirit of obedience and discipline. Jails are no gate-way to liberty for the confirmed criminal. They are temples of liberty only for those who are innocence personified. The execution of Socrates made immortality a living reality for us—not so the execution of countless murderers. There is no warrant for supposing that we can steal *Swaraj* by the imprisonment of thousands of nominally non-violent men with hatred, ill-will and violence raging in their breasts.

It would be otherwise if we were fighting with arms, giving and receiving blow for blow. The imprisonment of those who may be caught intimidating, assaulting and

murdering will certainly embarrass the Government and when they are tired, they would as elsewhere yield. But such is not our fight to-day. Let us be truthful. If it is through 'show of force' that we wish to gain *Swaraj*, let us drop non-violence and offer such violence as we may. It would be a manly, honest and sober attitude—an attitude the world has been used to for ages past. No one can then accuse us of the terrible charge of hypocrisy.

But the majority will not listen to me in spite of all my warnings and passionate plea for rejecting my resolution, if they did not believe in non-violence as indispensable for the attainment of our goal. They accepted it without a single material change. I would ask them therefore to realise their responsibility. They are now bound not to rush to civil disobedience but to settle down to the quiet work of construction. I would urge them to be indifferent to the clamour for immediate action. The immediate action is not courting imprisonment, nor even free speech and free association or free pen, but self-purification, introspection, quiet organisation. We have lost our foothold. If we do not take care, we are likely to be drowned in the waters whose depth we do not know.

It is no use thinking of the prisoners. When I heard of Chanri Chaura I sacrificed them as the first penitential act. They have gone to jail to be released only by the strength of the people, 'indeed the hope was the *Swaraj* Parliament's first act would be to open the prison gates. God had decreed otherwise. We who are outside have tried and failed. The prisoners can now only gain by serving the full term of their imprisonment. Those who went under false pretences, or under any misapprehension or under mistaken understanding of the movement can

come out by apologising and by petitioning. The movement will be all the stronger for the purging. The stoutest hearts will rejoice in the opportunity of unexpectedly greater suffering. Though thousands of Russians have 'rotted' in the Russian prisons for years and years, that unhappy people are not yet free. Liberty is a jilt most difficult to woo and please. We have shown the power of suffering. But we have not suffered enough. If the people in general keep passively non-violent and if only a few are actively, honestly and knowingly non-violent in intent, word and deed, we can reach the goal in the quickest time with the least suffering. But we shall indefinitely postpone the attainment if we send to prison men who harbour violence in their breasts.

Therefore the duty of the majority in their respective provinces is to face taunts, insults and if need be depletion in their ranks but determinedly to pursue their goal without swerving an inch. The authorities mistaking our suspension for weakness may resort to still greater oppression. We should submit to it. We should even abandon defensive civil disobedience and concentrate all our energy on the tasteless but health-giving economic and social reform. We should bend down on our knees and assure the moderates that they need fear no harm from us. We should assure the Zamindars that we have no ill-will against them.

The average Englishman is haughty, he does not understand us, he considers himself to be a superior being. He thinks that he is born to rule us. He relies upon his forts or his gun to protect himself. He despises us. He wants to compel co-operation, *i.e.*, slavery. Even him we have to conquer, not by bending the knee, but remaining aloof from him, but at the same time not

hating him nor hurting him. It is cowardly to molest him. If we simply refuse to regard ourselves as his slaves and pay homage to him, we have done our duty. A mouse can only shun the cat. He cannot treat with her till she has filed the points of her claws and teeth. At the same time we must show every attention to those few Englishmen who are trying to cure themselves and fellow Englishmen of the disease of race superiority.

The minority has different ideals. It does not believe in the programme. Is it not right and patriotic for them to form a new party and a new organisation? They will then truly educate the country. Those who do not believe in the creed should surely retire from the Congress. Even a national organisation must have a creed. One, for instance, who does not believe in *Swaraj* has no place in the Congress. I submit that even so has one who does not believe in 'peaceful and legitimate means' no place in the Congress. A Congressman may not believe in non-co-operation and still remain in it but he cannot believe in violence and untruth and still be a Congressman. I was therefore deeply hurt when I found opposition to the note in the resolution about the creed and still more when I found opposition to my paraphrase of the two adjectives 'peaceful' and 'legitimate' into 'non-violent' and 'truthful' respectively. I had reasons for the paraphrase. I was seriously told that the creed did not insist upon non-violence and truth as the indispensable means for the attainment of *Swaraj*. I agreed to remove the paraphrase in order to avoid a painful discussion but I felt that truth was stabbed.

I am sure that those who raised this opposition are as patriotic as I claim to be, they are as eager for *Swaraj*

as every other Congressman. But I do say that the patriotic spirit demands their loyal and strict adherence to non-violence and truth, and that if they do not believe in them they should retire from the Congress organisation.

Is it not national economy to let all the ideals be sharply defined and to work independently of one another? That then which is most popular will win the day. If we are going to evolve the real spirit of democracy, we shall not do so by obstruction but by abstention.

The session of the All-India Congress Committee was a forcible demonstration of the fact that we are retarding the country's progress towards *Swaraj* and not the Government. Every mistake of the Government helps. Every neglect of duty on our part hinders.

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## REPLY TO CRITICS

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It the Bardoli decisions offended a few zealous followers of Mr. Gandhi, the Delhi resolutions were condemned by a large section of the public. Congressmen were uncomfortable at the sudden and incessant changes of programme. Doubts as to the validity of the principles of non-violence were openly discussed, some adhering to it as a mere policy, and as policy liable to change. To these Mr. Gandhi replied :

I am sorry that I find a nervous fear among some Hindus and Mahomedans that I am undermining their faith and that I am even doing irreparable harm to India by my uncompromising preaching of non-violence. They seem almost to imply that violence is their creed. I touch a tender spot if I talk about extreme non-violence in their presence. They confound me with texts from the Mahabharata and the Koran eulogising or permitting violence. Of the Mahabharata I can write without restraint, but the most devout Mahomedan will not, I hope, deny me the privilege of understanding the message of the Prophet. I make bold to say that violence is the creed of no religion and that whereas non-violence in most cases is obligatory in all, violence is merely permissible in some cases. But I have not put before India the final form of non-violence. The non-violence that I have preached from Congress platforms is non-violence as a policy. But even policies require honest adherence in thought, word and deed. If I believe that honesty is the best policy, surely whilst I so believe I must be honest in thought, word and deed ; otherwise I become an impostor. Non-violence being a policy means that it can upon due notice be given up when

it proves unsuccessful or ineffective. But simple morality demands that whilst a particular policy is pursued, it must be pursued with all one's heart. It is simple policy to march along a certain route, but the soldier who marches with an unsteady step along that route is liable to be summarily dismissed. I become therefore incredulous when people talk to me sceptically about non-violence or are seized with fright at the very mention of the word non-violence. If they do not believe in the expedient of non-violence, they must denounce it but not claim to believe in the expedient when their heart resists it. How disastrous it would be if, not believing in violence even as an expedient, I joined, say, a violence party and approached a gun with a perturbed heart! The reader will believe me when I say that I have the capacity for killing a fly. But I do not believe in killing even flies. Now suppose I joined an expedition for fly-killing as an expedient. Will I not be expected before being permitted to join the expedition to use all the available engines of destruction whilst I remained in the army of fly-killers? If those who are in the Congress and the Khilafat Committees will perceive this simple truth, we shall certainly either finish the struggle this year to a successful end or be so sick of non-violence as to give up the pretension and set about devising some other programme.

I hold that Swami Shraddhanandji has been needlessly criticised for the proposition he intended to move. His argument is absolutely honest. He thinks that we as a body do not really believe in non-violence even as a policy. Therefore we shall never fulfil the programme of non-violence. Therefore, he says, let us go to the Councils and get what crumbs we may. He was trying to show the unreality of the position of those



who believe in the policy with their lips whereas they are looking forward to violence for final deliverance. I do say that if Congressmen do not fully believe in the policy, they are doing an injury to the country by pretending to follow it. If violence is to be the basis of future Government, the Councillors are undoubtedly the wisest. For it is through the Councils that by the same devices by which the present administrators rule us, the Councillors hope to seize power from the former's hands. I have little doubt that those who nurse violence in their bosoms will find no benefit from the lip profession of non-violence. I urge therefore with all the vehemence at my command that those who do not believe in non-violence should secede from the Congress and from non-co-operation and prepare to seek election, or re-join law courts or Government colleges as the case may be. Let there be no manner of doubt that *Swaraj* established by non-violent means will be different in kind from the *Swaraj* that can be established by armed rebellion. Police and punishments there will be even under such *Swaraj*. But there would be no room for brutalities such as we witness to day both on the part of the people and the Government. And those, whether they call themselves Hindus or Mussulmans, who do not fully believe in the policy of non-violence, should abandon both non-co-operation and non-violence.

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It is thus clear what I would like the Provincial organisations to do. They must not for the present disobey the Government orders so far as it is at all possible. They must not, before they have searched their hearts, take forward action but bring about an absolutely calm atmosphere. No imprisonment courted in anger has availed us anything. I agree with the

Mussulman view which is also the Hindu view that there is no imprisonment for the sake of it. All imprisonment to be useful has to be courted for religion or country and that by men and women clad in *khaddar* and without anger or violence in their hearts. If the Provinces have no such men and women, they should not embark on civil disobedience at all.

Hence it is that the constructive programme has been framed. It will steady and calm us. It will wake our organising spirit, it will make us industrious, it will render us fit for *Swaraj*, it will cool our blood. We shall be spat upon, laughed at, sworn at, may be even kicked and cursed. We must put up with it all, inasmuch as we have harboured anger in our breasts even though we have been under the pledge of non-violence and manufacture of *khaddar*, we cannot render effective help to the Khilafat, we cannot get redress of the Punjab wrong, nor can we attain *Swaraj*. My leadership is perfectly useless if I cannot convince co-workers and the public of the absolute and immediate necessity of vigorously prosecuting the constructive programme.

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Several Mussulman friends have said : "Your programme is good for *Swaraj* but it is too slow to be good enough for saving the Khilafat. The Khilafat question will be solved in a few months and whatever can be done must be done now." Let us examine the question. The cause of the Khilafat, thank God, is safe in the hands of Ghazi Mustafa Kemal Pasha. He has retrieved the prestige of the Khilafat as no Mussulman of modern times has done. India has, in my opinion, helped not much by her money though that has meant something, but by Hindu-Muslim unity and by telling the Government in the plainest terms

possible that India will have nothing to do with the Government and will declare complete independence if England persists in her anti-Turk policy and exploits India's resources against the Turks. The greater the strength in that declaration, the greater becomes the prestige of Islam and the greater the power of Mustafa Kemal Pasha. Some people think that mere temporary embarrassment of the Government by a few thousand men, irrespective of qualification, going to jail, will make the Government yield to our wishes. Let us not underrate the power of the Government. I am sure that the Government does possess as yet the power to crush the spirit of violence. And it is nothing but violence to go to jail anyhow. It is the suffering of the pure and God-fearing which will tell, not the bluster of the rabble. The purer India becomes, the stronger she becomes. Purity is the only weapon of the weak in body. The strong in body in their insolence often mobilise their hard fibre and seek to usurp the very function of the Almighty. But when that hard fibre comes in contact, not with its like but with the exact opposite, it has nothing to work against. A solid body can only move on and against another solid body. You cannot build castles in the air. Therefore the impatient Mussulmans must see the obvious truth that the little disorganised bluster of the rabble, whether it expresses itself by going to jail or by burning buildings or by making noisy demonstrations, will be no match for the organised insolence of the hard fibre of the most determined people in the world. This terrific insolence can only be met by the utter humility of the pure and the meek. God helps the helpless, not those who believe they can do something. Every page of the Koran teaches

me, a non-Muslim, this supreme lesson. Every *sura* of Koran begins in the name of God the Compassionate and the Merciful. Let us therefore be strong in soul though weak in body.

If the Mussulmans believe in the policy of non-violence, they must give it a fair trial and they will not have given it any trial at all if they harbour anger, *i.e.*, violence in their breasts.

As it is, by our bluster, by intimidation, by show of force, by violent picketing, we shall estrange more men than intimidate into co-operation with us. And how can we dare seek co-operation by compulsion when we have refused to be coerced into co-operation with the Government? Must we not observe the same law that we expect others to observe towards us?

If the Treaty of Sevres is not revised to our satisfaction, it is not finished. The virtue lies in India's determination not to be satisfied with anything less than her demands. After all Mustafa Kemal may insist upon the settlement of the *Juzurut-ul-Arab*. We must continue the fight so long as it is not returned intact to the Mussulmans. If the Mussulmans consider that they can gain their end by force of arms, let them secede from the non-violent alliance by all means. But if they know that they cannot, let them carry it out in thought, word and deed and they will find that there is no surer or quicker remedy for assuaging their grief and redressing the *Khilafat* wrong.

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I have carefully read Mr. Kelkar's article in the *Mahratta* criticising the Bardoli resolutions. I acknowledge the gentle and considerate manner with which he has handled me. I wish I could persuade him and many

who think like Mr. Kelkar, that what he calls a somersault was an inevitable operation. Consistency is a desirable quality but it becomes a hobgoblin when it refuses to see facts. I have known dispositions of armies changed from hour to hour. Once during the Zulu revolt we were all asleep. We had definite orders for the morrow. But suddenly at about midnight we were awakened and ordered to retire behind bags of grain, which served as protecting walls because the enemy was reported to be creeping up the hill on which we had encamped. In another hour it was understood that it was a false alarm and we were permitted to retire to our tents. All the somersaults were necessary changes. Remedies vary with the variation in diagnosis. The same physician one day detects malaria and gives a large dose of quinine; detects typhoid the next and stops all medicine and orders careful nursing and fasting; later detects consumption and orders change and solid food. Is the physician capricious or cautious and honest? \* \* \*

The fact is, that the critics do not realise the implications of civil disobedience. They seem unconsciously to ignore the potent adjective 'civil'.

The more I think of the Bardoli decision and the more I rehearse the debates and the talks at Delhi, the more convinced I am of the correctness of the decision, and of the necessity of Provinces stopping all offensive activities for the time being, even at the risk of being considered weak and forfeiting popular applause and support.

A correspondent from Lahore writes under date 3rd March :

So far as the facts about Bardoli decision have come to light, it appears the decision was arrived at either under the influence

of Pundit Malaviya or under some far-fetched notions of non-violence. In the former case the act is most unworthy and in the latter it is most unwise. Is not the ideal of the Congress *Swaraj* and not Non-violence? People have imbibed non-violence generally which surely must do for the Congress purpose. How the breaches like those at Bombay and Gorakhpur can make the engine come to a standstill I cannot understand. And if M. Paul Richard is true as to your aspirations of a world leader through non-violence even at the cost of Indian interest, it is surely unbecoming and, excuse me to say, dishonest.

And have you realised the effects of this sudden standstill? Mr. Montagu's threat comes for that, Lord Reading and his Government are harder to us than even before. It had almost yielded. As to the public, there is a general distrust prevailing among the classes and the masses. Surely it is difficult to make men play things of the hour, and their disgust and disappointment show how the fight was carried on in right earnest. Don't you perceive that it is a shock and that two such shocks must enervate the combatants altogether?

Besides I have heard the responsible Mussulmans talk of withdrawing co-operation even from the Hindus. The fight is religious with them. It is the *Jehad* I should say. God's command and the Prophet's is no joke to start and to stop the *Jehad* at will. If the Hindus should retire, they say they must devise their own course. Will you take care to ease one heart that feels uneasy on this account?

It is impossible to withhold sympathy from the writer. His letter is typical of the attitude I saw reflected in Delhi. I have already given the assurance that Pundit Malaviyaji had nothing to do with the Bardoli decision, nor have any far-fetched notions of non-violence anything to do with it. The correspondent's letter is the best justification for it. To me the Bardoli decision is the logical outcome of the national pledge of limited non-violence. I entirely endorse the opinion that *Swaraj* is the nation's goal, not non-violence. It is true that my goal is as much *Swaraj* as non-violence, because I hold *Swaraj* for the masses to be unattainable save through non-violence. But have I not repeatedly said that I would have India become free even by violence rather than that she should remain in bondage? In slavery she is a

helpless partner in the violence of the slave-holder. It is, however, true that I could not take part in a violent attempt at deliverance if only because I do not believe in the possibility of success by violence. I cannot pull the trigger against my worst enemy. If I succeed in convincing the world of the supremacy of the law of non-violence and the futility of violence for the progress of mankind, the correspondent will find that India will have automatically gained her end. But I freely confess my utter inability to do so without first convincing India that she can be free only by non-violent and truthful means and no other.

I must further confess that what Mr. Montagu or Lord Reading would think of the decision did not concern me and therefore their threats do not perturb or affect me, nor should they affect any non-co-operator. He burnt his boats when he embarked upon his mission. But this I know that if India becomes non-violent in intent, word and deed, even the hearts of Mr. Montagu and Lord Reading will be changed. As it is, marvellous though our progress has been in non-violent action, our hearts and our speech have not become non-violent. Mr. Montagu and Lord Reading do not believe in the sincerity of our profession nor in the possibility of sincere workers succeeding in creating a truly non-violent atmosphere. What is therefore required, is more and yet more non-violence in intent, word and deed.

As for the people, I have little doubt that they will survive the purifying shock. I regard the present depression as a prelude to steady progress. But should it prove otherwise, the truth of the Bardoli decision cannot be denied. It stands independent of public approval. God is, even though the whole world deny Him. Truth stands even if there be no public support. It is self-sustained.

## A DIVINE WARNING

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Writing to the *Nava Jivan* in January 1922, on the third day of the fast, Mahatma Gandhi declared again his conviction that India could yet win her freedom by her age-long method of *ahimsa* or non-violence:

If a person commits a mistake for the first time he is excused; only the generous public forgives in him the repetition of the error. But if he is responsible even on a third occasion for the same mistake, the public leaves him severely alone. If a man is deceived once or twice he is thought a simpleton, but if is ever being deceived he is rightly condemned a fool. Mass civil disobedience at Bardoli has passed off as a dream. God thought it fit in His supreme wisdom to dispose of my plans just at the moment when I thought that mass civil disobedience could be commenced. There is nothing strange in this. In the Ramayana we see that Rama was banished to the wild forests when all was ready for his coronation. That has a lesson for us. We understand the true meaning of *Swaraj* only when we readily recognise the unreality of things which we had all along thought to be too true. It seems to me that the attempt made to win *Swaraj* is *Swaraj* itself. The faster we run towards it, the longer seems to be the distance to be traversed. The same is the case with all ideals. When one goes in pursuit of truth he finds that it is always eluding his grasp, because he sees now and then that what he once thought too true is no more than a fond illusion. The righteous man is always humble. He recognises



his shortcomings day by day. A *Brahmachari* who seeks true *Brahmacharyam*, feels too often that the longing after wordly pleasures is still in him, making the attainment of his ideal almost impossible. He who seeks *Moksha* or deliverance experiences a similar feeling. All this explains the great *Nathi*. The sages who retired for *tapas* to the mountains and forests, found themselves confronted with the *Nathi*. Some of the *Maharishis* had probably a glimpse of the truth.

#### SWARAJ IS THE ATTEMPT TO WIN IT

I am now convinced more firmly than ever that *Swaraj* lies in our efforts to win it. Ahmedabad and Viramgaum committed excesses. So too did Amritsar and Kasur. *Satyagraha* was then postponed because of those mob excesses. Last November I was eye-witness to the horrid outbreak at Bombay. Then too mass civil disobedience was postponed. But the bitterest cup of humiliation was yet to come. Chauri Chaura taught me the most valuable lesson. I do not know how much more is still in store for me. Now if people grow impatient and consider me a fool, it will not be their fault. Why should I meddle in their affairs if I had not the capacity to understand their true nature? I could not sit with folded arms allowing things to drift. I could not but make open confession of error when any occurred. I would prefer being deposed from leadership to paying lip-homage to truth and allowing the spirit within me to get corrupt by the overpowering weakness of the flesh. "If the Rana gets angry the people will give me shelter, but no one can protect me from God's wrath" is the strain of Mirabai's song and this has a moral for the world. We shall not court God's disfavour. We must pay heed to His warnings. If we had persisted in mass civil

disobedience at Bardoli in spite of Gorakhpur, there would have resulted immense harm to the public cause. We would have thrown aside truth and peace. The first condition to mass civil disobedience at Bardoli was perfect peace in the other parts of the country. Bardoli would have sinned if it had proceeded with the campaign in violation of our solemn pledge.

#### KEEP ABOVE REPROACH

We need not feel impatient if some people ask whether such perfect peace is at all attainable. Those who argue in this strain, wish the abandonment of *Satyagraha* and civility. We have to keep above the reproach of incivility. We should constitute ourselves the trustees of India's honour and it is incumbent on us to see that no unrighteous or incivil action is done under cover of righteous or civil pretences. Bardoli kept peace and I maintained it. Both Bardoli and myself have done some service to the people. I think that by recanting my error, I have proved the fitness of a true servant. I am sure that the people will not lose strength but rise all the better for this confession. It is very true that God alone has rescued us from shame. I must have learnt a lesson from Madras but I did not. If a favourite of God does not take note of His warning by means of ordinary indications, the All-Merciful warns him by flare of trumpets and beat of drums, and if he does not wake up even then, He makes him realise the truth by thunder-storm. We have, by doing the right thing, put an end to imminent danger.

We had to retrace our steps and we did it in all humility.

A man who strays from his path, has to retrace his steps and arrive at the same place from where he missed

the way. We were taking the downward path after the Working Committee passed the resolution on civil disobedience but now we are climbing up.

#### HOW LOVE PUNISHES

But a mere recantation was not enough for me. More severe penance had to be undergone. I was seized with an immense mental pain the moment I heard of the Gorakhpur tragedy. Bodily punishment was indispensable to me. A fast of five days will not suffice to make up for all my errors. I wished a fast of fourteen days, but friends persuaded me to limit it to five. The debtor who pays his full debt in time saves himself from future ruin. There must be no advertising of these *prayaschittas*. But there is a reason for my making it public. The fast is a penance for me and punishment for the culprits of Chauri Chaura. Love can only punish by suffering. I warn the public by making my fast known to them. I have no other option. If any non-co-operator deceives me, I take the whole of India to be a non-co-operating body—let him take away my body. I still believe that India wants my bodily existence. I warn the people by torturing my physical frame not to cheat me. If India wills it, let her get rid of me by abandoning non-violence. But as long as she accepts my services, she must remain non-violent and truthful. If the people will not heed this warning, I am determined to prolong this fast of five days into one of fifty and thus put an end to my life at the end of it.

# THE ARREST AND THE GREAT TRIAL

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## "IF I AM ARRESTED"

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For months together the rumour of Mr. Gandhi's impending arrest was in the air. Expecting the inevitable Mr. Gandhi had more than once written his final message. But in the first week of March 1922, the rumour became more widespread and pronounced. The stiffening of public opinion in England, and Mr. Montagu's threatening speech in defence of his Indian policy in the Commons, revealed the fact that the Secretary of State had already sanctioned Mr. Gandhi's prosecution. Chauri Chaura and the Delhi decisions were presumably the immediate cause of Government's action on Mr. Gandhi. Realising this, Mr. Gandhi wrote the following in his Gujarati weekly *Nava Jivan* which, rendered into English, reads as follows:

I have been constantly thinking of what the people would do in case I am arrested. My co-workers also have been putting this question to me. What would be the plight of India if the people took to the wrong path through love run mad? What would be my own plight in such a case?

Rivers of blood shed by the Government cannot frighten me, but I would be deeply pained even if the people did so much as abuse the Government for my sake or in my name. It would be disgracing me if the people lost their equilibrium on my arrest. The nation can achieve no progress merely by depending upon me. Progress is possible only by their understanding and following the path suggested by me. For this reason I desire that the people should maintain perfect self-control and consider the day of my arrest as a day of

rejoicing. I desire that even the weakness existing to-day should disappear at that time.

What can be the motive of the Government in arresting me? The Government are not my enemy; for I have not a grain of enmity towards them. But they believe that I am the soul of all this agitation, that if I am removed, the ruled and the ruler would be left in peace, that the people are blindly following me. Not only the Government but some of our leaders also share this belief. How then can the Government put the people to the test? How can the Government ascertain whether the people do understand my advice or are simply dazzled by my utterances?

The only way left to them is to arrest me. Of course there still remains an alternative for them and that lies in the removal of the causes which have led me to offer this advice. But intoxicated as they are with power, the Government will not see their own fault and even if they do, they will not admit it. The only way then that remains for them is to measure the strength of the people. They can do this by arresting me. If the people are thus terrorised into submission, they can be said to deserve the Punjab and the Khilafat wrongs.

If, on the other hand, the people resort to violence, they will merely be playing into the hands of the Government. Their aeroplanes will then bomb the people, their Dyers will shoot them, and their Smiths will uncover the veils of our women. There will be other officers to make the people rub their noses against the ground, crawl on their bellies and undergo the scourge of whipping. Both these results will be equally bad and unfortunate. They will not lead to *Swaraj*. In other

countries Government have been overthrown by sheer brute force, but I have often shown that India cannot attain *Swaraj* by that force. What then should the people do if I am arrested ?

The answer now is simple. The people

1. should preserve peace and calmness ;
2. should not observe *Hartal* ;
3. should not hold meetings, but
4. should be fully awake.

I should certainly expect

5. all the Government Schools to be vacated and shut down ;
6. lawyers to withdraw from practice in greater numbers ;
7. settlement by private arbitration of cases pending before the Courts ;
8. opening of numerous national schools and colleges ;
9. renunciation of all foreign cloth in favour of the exclusive use of hand-spun and hand-woven garments by lakhs of men and women, and selling or burning of any foreign cloth in stock ;
10. none to enlist in the army or in any other Government service ;
11. those able to earn their livelihood by other means to give up Government service ;
12. contribution of as much as is wanted towards national funds ;
13. title holders to surrender titles in greater numbers ;
14. candidates to withdraw from elections, or if already elected, to resign their seats ;

15. voters who have not yet made up their minds, to resolve that it is sin to send any representative to the Councils ;

If the people resolve and carry this out, they would not have to wait for *Swaraj* even for a year. If they exhibit this much strength we shall have attained *Swaraj*.

I shall then be set free under the nation's seal. That will please me. My freedom to-day is like a prison to me.

It will only prove the peoples' incompetence if they use violence to release me and then depend upon my help to attain *Swaraj* for them. Neither I nor any one else can get *Swaraj* for the Nation. It will be got on the Nation proving its own fitness.

In conclusion, it is useless to find fault with the Government. We get what government we deserve. When we improve, the Government is also bound to improve. Only when we improve can we attain *Swaraj*. Non-co-operation is the Nation's determination to improve. Will the Nation abandon the resolve and begin to co-operate after my arrest? If the people become mad and take to violence and as a result of it crawl on their bellies, rub their noses on the ground, salute the Union Jack and walk eighteen miles to do it, what else is that but co-operation? It is better to die than to submit to crawling, etc. In fine, consider it from any point of view, the course suggested by me is the right one for the people to take.

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## THE ARREST

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Mr. Gandhi was arrested at the Satyagraha Ashram, Ahmedabad, on Friday the 10th March, for certain articles published in his *Young India*. On the 11th noon Messrs. Gandhi and Shankarlal Banker, the publisher, were placed before Mr. Brown, Assistant Magistrate, the Court being held in the Divisional Commissioner's Office at Sahibah. The prosecution was conducted by Rao Bahadur Girdharilal, Public Prosecutor. The Superintendent of Police, Ahmedabad, the first witness, produced the Bombay Government's authority to lodge a complaint for four articles published in *Young India*, dated the 15th June 1921, entitled "Disaffection a Virtue"; dated the 29th September "Tampering with Loyalty"; dated the 15th December "The Puzzle and Its Solution" and dated the 23rd February 1922 "Shaking the Manes". Two formal police witnesses were then produced. The accused declined to cross-examine the witnesses.

## MR. GANDHI'S STATEMENT

Mr. M. K. Gandhi, 53, farmer and weaver by profession, residing at Satyagraha Ashram, Sabarmati, said :

I simply wish to state that when the proper time comes, I shall plead guilty so far as disaffection towards the Government is concerned. It is quite true that I am the Editor of the *Young India* and that the articles read in my presence were written by me, and the proprietors and publishers had permitted me to control the whole policy of the paper.

The case then having been committed to the Sessions, Mr. Gandhi was taken to the Sabarmati Jail where he was detained till the hearing which was to come off on March 18.



## THE GREAT TRIAL

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### STATEMENT BEFORE THE COURT

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The trial of Mr. Gandhi and Shankarlal Banker took place at the Government Circuit House, Ahmedabad, on Saturday the 18th March 1922, before Mr. C. N. Broomfield, I.C.S., District and Sessions Judge, Ahmedabad. The trial opened at 12 noon, the Honourable Sir J. T. Strangman, Advocate-General, Bombay, conducting the prosecution. The accused were undefended.

The charges having been read out, the Judge called upon the accused to plead to the charge. He asked Mr. Gandhi whether he pleaded guilty or claimed to be tried.

Mr. Gandhi: "I plead guilty to all the charges. I observe that the King's name has been omitted from the charges and it has been properly omitted."

The Judge: Mr. Banker, do you plead guilty or do you claim to be tried?"

Mr. Banker: "I plead guilty."

The Advocate-General then began to urge the trial. His argument over, the Court asked Mr. Gandhi:

"Mr. Gandhi, do you wish to make a statement on the question of sentence?"

Mr. Gandhi: "I would like to make a statement."

Court: "Could you give it to me in writing to put it on record?"

Mr. Gandhi: "I shall give it as soon as I finish reading it."

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## ORAL STATEMENT

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Before reading his written statement, Mr. Gandhi spoke a few words as introductory remarks to the whole statement. He said :

Before I read this statement, I would like to state that I entirely endorse the learned Advocate-General's remarks in connection with my humble self. I think that he was entirely fair to me in all the statements that he has made, because it is very true and I have no desire whatsoever to conceal from this Court the fact that to preach disaffection towards the existing system of Government has become almost a passion with me. And the learned Advocate-General is also entirely in the right when he says that my preaching of disaffection did not commence with my connection with *Young India* but that it commenced much earlier, and in the statement that I am about to read it will be my painful duty to admit before this Court that it commenced much earlier than the period stated by the Advocate-General. It is the most painful duty with me, but I have to discharge that duty knowing the responsibility that rested upon my shoulders.

And I wish to endorse all the blame that the Advocate-General has thrown on my shoulders in connection with the Bombay occurrences, the Madras occurrences and the Chauri Chaura occurrences. Thinking over these things deeply and sleeping over them night after night and examining my heart, I have come to the conclusion that it is impossible for me to dissociate myself from the diabolical crimes of Chauri Chaura or the mad

outrages of Bombay. He is quite right when he says that as a man of responsibility, a man having received a fair share of education, having had a fair share of experience of this world, I should know the consequences of every one of my acts. I knew them. I knew that I was playing with fire. I ran the risk and if I was set free I would still do the same. I would be failing in my duty if I do not do so. I have felt it this morning that I would have failed in my duty if I did not say all what I said here just now. I wanted to avoid violence. Non-violence is the first article of my faith. It is the last article of my faith. But I had to make my choice. I had either to submit to a system which I considered has done an irreparable harm to my country or incur the risk of the mad fury of my people bursting forth when they understood the truth from my lips. I know that my people have sometimes gone mad. I am deeply sorry for it; and I am therefore here to submit not to a light penalty but to the highest penalty. I do not ask for mercy. I do not plead any extenuating act. I am here therefore to invite and submit to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is a deliberate crime and what appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. The only course open to you, Mr. Judge, is, as I am just going to say in my statement, either to resign your post or inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and law you are assisting to administer are good for the people. I do not expect that kind of conversion. But by the time I have finished with my statement, you will perhaps have a glimpse of what is raging within my breast to run this maddest risk which a sane man can run.

## WRITTEN STATEMENT

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The following is the full text of the written statement which Mr. Gandhi made before the Court :

I owe it perhaps to the Indian public and to the public in England to placate which this prosecution is mainly taken up that I should explain why from a staunch loyalist and co-operator I have become an uncompromising disaffectionist and non-co-operator. To the Court too I should say why I plead guilty to the charge of promoting disaffection towards the Government established by law in India.

My public life began in 1893 in South Africa in troubled weather. My first contact with British authority in that country was not of a happy character. I discovered that as a man and as an Indian I had no rights. On the contrary I discovered that I had no rights as a man because I was an Indian.

But I was not baffled. I thought this treatment of Indians was an excrescence upon a system that was intrinsically and mainly good. I gave the Government my voluntary and hearty co-operation, criticising it fully where I felt it was faulty, but never wishing its destruction.

Consequently when the existence of the Empire was threatened in 1899 by the Boer challenge, I offered my services to it, raised a volunteer ambulance corps and served at several actions that took place for the relief of Ladysmith. Similarly in 1906, at the time of the Zulu revolt, I raised a stretcher-bearer party and served till the end of the rebellion. On both these

occasions I received medals and was even mentioned in despatches. For my work in South Africa I was given by Lord Hardinge a Kaiser-i-Hind Gold Medal. When the War broke out in 1914 between England and Germany, I raised a volunteer ambulance corps in London consisting of the then resident Indians in London, chiefly students. Its work was acknowledged by the authorities to be valuable. Lastly in India when a special appeal was made at the War Conference in Delhi in 1917 by Lord Chelmsford for recruits, I struggled at the cost of my health to raise a corps in Kheda and the response was being made when the hostilities ceased and orders were received that no more recruits were wanted. In all these efforts at service, I was actuated by the belief that it was possible by such services to gain a status of full equality in the Empire for my countrymen.

The first shock came in the shape of the Rowlatt Act, a law designed to rob the people of all real freedom. I felt called upon to lead an intensive agitation against it. Then followed the Punjab horrors beginning with the massacre at Jallianwala Bagh and culminating in crawling orders, public floggings and other indescribable humiliations. I discovered too that the plighted word of the Prime Minister to the Mussulmans of India regarding the integrity of Turkey and the holy places of Islam was not likely to be fulfilled. But in spite of the foreboding and the grave warnings of friends at the Amritsar Congress in 1919, I fought for co-operation and working the Montagu-Chelmsford reforms, hoping that the Prime Minister would redeem his promise to the Indian Mussulmans, that the Punjab wound would be healed, and that the reforms, inadequate and unsatisfactory though they were, marked a new era of hope in the life of India.

But all that hope was shattered. The Khilafat promise was not to be redeemed. The Punjab crime was whitewashed, and most culprits went not only unpunished but remained in service and some continued to draw pensions from the Indian revenue and in some cases were even rewarded. I saw too that not only did the reforms not mark a change of heart, but they were only a method of further draining India of her wealth and of prolonging her servitude.

I came reluctantly to the conclusion that the British connection had made India more helpless than she ever was before, politically and economically. A disarmed India has no power of resistance against any aggressor if she wanted to engage in an armed conflict with him. So much is this the case that some of our best men consider that India must take generations before she can achieve the Dominion Status. She has become so poor that she has little power of resisting famines. Before the British advent, India spun and wove in her millions of cottages just the supplement she needed for adding to her meagre agricultural resources. The cottage industry, so vital for India's existence, has been ruined by incredibly heartless and inhuman processes as described by English witnesses. Little do town-dwellers know how the semi-starved masses of Indians are slowly sinking to lifelessness. Little do they know that their miserable comfort represents the brokerage they get for the work they do for the foreign exploiter, that the profits and the brokerage are sucked from the masses. Little do they realise that the Government established by law in British India is carried on for this exploitation of the masses. No sophistry, no jugglery in figures can explain away the

evidence the skeletons in many villages present to the naked eye. I have no doubt whatsoever that both England and the town-dwellers of India will have to answer, if there is a God above, for this crime against humanity which is perhaps unequalled in history. The law itself in this country has been used to serve the foreign exploiter. My unbiassed examination of the Punjab Martial Law cases has led me to believe that at least ninety-five per cent. of convictions were wholly bad. My experience of political cases in India leads me to the conclusion that in nine out of every ten the condemned men were totally innocent. Their crime consisted in love of their country. In ninety-nine cases out of hundred, justice has been denied to Indians as against Europeans in the Courts of India. This is not an exaggerated picture. It is the experience of almost every Indian who has had anything to do with such cases. In my opinion the administration of the law is thus prostituted consciously or unconsciously for the benefit of the exploiter.

The greatest misfortune is that Englishmen and their Indian associates in the administration of the country do not know that they are engaged in the crime I have attempted to describe. I am satisfied that many English and Indian officials honestly believe that they are administering one of the best systems devised in the world and that India is making steady though slow progress. They do not know that a subtle but effective system of terrorism and an organised display of force on the one hand, and the deprivation of all powers of retaliation or self-defence on the other, have emasculated the people and induced in them the habit of simulation. This awful habit has added to the ignorance and the self-deception of the administrators. Section 124-A under

which I am happily charged is perhaps the prince among the political sections of the Indian Penal Code designed to suppress the liberty of the citizen. Affection cannot be manufactured or regulated by law. If one has no affection for a person or thing, one should be free to give the fullest expression to his disaffection so long as he does not contemplate, promote or incite to violence. But the Section under which Mr. Banker and I are charged is one under which mere promotion of disaffection is a crime. I have studied some of the cases tried under it and I know that some of the most loved of India's patriots have been convicted under it. I consider it a privilege therefore to be charged under it. I have endeavoured to give in their briefest outline the reasons for my disaffection. I have no personal ill-will against any single administrator, much less can I have any disaffection towards the King's person. But I hold it to be a virtue to be disaffected towards a Government which, in its totality, has done more harm to India than any previous system. India is less manly under the British rule than she ever was before. Holding such a belief I consider it to be a sin to have affection for the system. And it has been a precious privilege for me to be able to write what I have in the various articles tendered in evidence against me.

In fact I believe that I have rendered a service to India and England by showing in Non-Co-operation the way out of the unnatural state in which both are living. In my humble opinion, non-co-operation with evil is as much a duty as is co-operation with good. But in the past, non-co-operation has been deliberately expressed in violence to the evil-doer. I am endeavouring to show to my countrymen that violent non-co-operation only



multiplies evil and that as evil can only be sustained by violence, withdrawal of support of evil requires complete abstention from violence. Non-violence implies voluntary submission to the penalty for non-co-operation with evil. I am here therefore to invite and submit cheerfully to the highest penalty that can be inflicted upon me for what in law is deliberate crime and which appears to me to be the highest duty of a citizen. That is the only course open to you, the Judge and the Assessors, is either to resign your posts and thus dissociate yourselves from evil, if you feel that the law you are called upon to administer is an evil and that in reality I am innocent, or to inflict on me the severest penalty if you believe that the system and the law you are assisting to administer are good for the people of this country and that my activity is therefore injurious to the public weal.

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## THE JUDGMENT

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After Mr. Gandhi had made his statement, Mr. Broomfield, Sessions Judge, pronounced the following judgment :

Mr. Gandhi, you have made my task easy one way by pleading guilty to the charge. Nevertheless what remains, namely, the determination of a just sentence is perhaps as difficult a proposition as a Judge in this country could have to face. The law is no respecter of persons. Nevertheless it will be impossible to ignore the fact that you are in a different category from any person I have ever tried or am likely to have to try. It would be impossible to ignore the fact that in the eyes of millions of your countrymen you are a great patriot and a great leader. Even those who differ from you in politics, look upon you as a man of high ideals and of noble and even saintly life. I have to deal with you in one character only. It is not my duty and I do not presume to judge or criticise you in any other character. It is my duty to judge you as a man subject to the law who has by his own admission broken the law and committed, what to an ordinary man must appear to be, grave offences against the State. I do not forget that you have consistently preached against violence and that you have on many occasions, as I am willing to believe, done much to prevent violence. But having regard to the nature of political teaching and the nature of many of those to whom it was addressed how you could have continued to believe that violence would not be the inevitable consequence, it passes my capacity to understand. There are probably few people in India who do not sincerely regret that you should have made it impossible for any Government to leave you at liberty. But it is so. I am trying to balance what is due to you against what appears to me to be necessary in the interest of the public, and I propose in passing sentence to follow the precedent of a case in many respects similar to this case that was decided some twelve years ago. I mean the case against Mr. Bal Gangadhar Tilak under the same section. The sentence that was passed upon him as it finally stood was a sentence of simple imprisonment for six years. You will not consider it unreasonable I think that you should be classed with Mr. Tilak. That is a sentence of two years' simple imprisonment in each count of the charge, six years in all which I feel it my duty to pass upon you; and I should like to say in doing so that if the course of events in India should make it possible for the Government to reduce the period and release you no one will be better pleased than I.

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## MR. GANDHI'S REPLY

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After the Judge had pronounced sentence, Mr. Gandhi said:

I would say one word since you have done me the honour of recalling the trial of the late Lokamanya Ba Gangadhar Tilak. I just want to say that I consider it to be the proudest privilege and honour to be associated with his name. So far as the sentence itself is concerned I certainly consider that it is as light as any Judge would inflict on me and so far as the whole proceedings are concerned, I must say that I could not have expected greater courtesy.

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## MESSAGE TO THE COUNTRY

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After sentence and before he left the Court, Mr. Gandhi asked the General Secretary of the Congress who was near him, to convey to the country the following message:

"I am delighted that heavenly peace reigned supreme throughout the country during the last six days. If it continues to the end of the chapter, it is bound to be brief and illuminating."

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A SCENE OF GANDHI'S OPERATION, SASSOON HOSPITAL, POONA, Feb. 1924.

## BELGAUM CONGRESS ADDRESS

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Mahatma Gandhi was a model prisoner. He indeed made no attempt to communicate with the outside but rumours of his ill-health reached the public from time to time. After about two years of prison life his health visibly weakened. Early in 1924 it threatened to give way and medical examination proved that his ailment was serious. He was at once removed to Poona, whence, after a successful operation for appendicitis he was released in the first week of February 1924. Soon after the release, Mr. Gandhi addressed a letter to Mr. Mahomed Ali, the President of the Congress, in the course of which he deplored the Hindu-Muslim frictions in the country and referred at some length to the controversy between the No-changers and *Swarajists*. For, during his imprisonment, the Civil Disobedience Committee had favoured Council entry and an important section of Congressmen, including the late C. R. Das and Pandit Motilal Nehru, had expressed themselves emphatically in favour of a Council programme. Mr. Gandhi himself stood by the triple boycott. But at Juhu where he was convalescing he came to an understanding with the *Swarajist* leaders, giving them a free hand to shape and prosecute their Council programme, at the same time making it obligatory on their part to fulfil the constructive programme of the Congress. When the All-India Congress Committee met in June 1924, Mr. Gandhi was able to persuade the house to adopt a resolution of a unique character, paving the way for what is called the spinning franchise: "That members of all elected Congress organisations shall, except when disabled by sickness . . . "regularly spin for at least half an hour every day and shall each send to the Secretary of All-India Khadi Board . . . at least 2,000 yards of even and well twisted yarn of their own spinning" not later than the 15th of each month. Though he succeeded in piloting the resolution through the Committee, the voting was so close and the temper of the house so divided that he felt himself "humbled and defeated". There was no mistaking the strength of the *Swarajists*. Later in the year Mr. Gandhi himself was, with remarkable unanimity, proposed to the Presidentship of the ensuing Congress at Belgaum. Mr. Gandhi took this opportunity to guide the No-changers and *Swarajists* by chalking out a definite programme for each party and also to unite them in their common endeavour to prosecute the

constructive programme. His views are set forth with characteristic simplicity and lucidity in his Presidential Address to the 39th Session of the Indian National Congress, at Belgaum, on the 26th December 1924, the full text of which is reproduced below :

FRIENDS,—It was after much misgiving that I accepted the burden of the honour you have done me to-day. The unique honour for this year should have been bestowed upon Shrinati Sarojini Naidu who did such wonderful work both in Kenya and South Africa. But it was not to be. The developments, both internal and external, have necessitated my acceptance of the burden. I know that I shall have your support in my attempt to do justice to the high office to which you have called me.

At the outset let me note with respectful feelings the deaths during the year of Bi Amman, Sir Asutosh Mukerji, Mr. Bhupendra Nath Basu, Dr. Subramania Iyer and Mr. Dal Bahadur Giri at home, and of Messrs. Rustomjee and P. K. Naidu in South Africa. I tender in your name my respectful condolences to the bereaved families.

#### RETROSPECTIVE

From the September of 1920 the Congress has been principally an institution for developing strength from within. It has ceased to function by means of resolutions addressed to the Government for redress of grievances. It did so because it ceased to believe in the beneficial character of the existing system of Government. The breach of faith with the Mussulmans of India was the first rude shock to the people's faith in the Government. The Rowlatt Act and O'Dwyerism, culminating in the Jallianwalla Bagh massacre, opened the eyes of the people to the true nature of the system. At the same time it was realised that the existence of the system depended upon the co-operation, whether conscious or unconscious, and whether voluntary or forced, of the people. With the

view therefore of mending or ending the system, it was decided to try to begin withdrawing voluntary co-operation from the top. At the Special Session of the Congress at Calcutta, in 1920, the boycott of Government titles, law-courts, educational institutions, legislative bodies and foreign cloth was resolved upon. All the boycotts were more or less taken up by the parties concerned. Those who could not or would not, retired from the Congress. I do not propose to trace the chequered career of the non-co-operation movement. Though not a single boycott was anywhere near completion, every one of them had undoubtedly the effect of diminishing the prestige of the particular institution boycotted.

The most important boycott was the boycott of violence. Whilst it appeared at one time to be entirely successful, it was soon discovered that the non-violence was only skin-deep. It was the passive non-violence of helplessness, not the enlightened non-violence of resourcefulness. The result was an eruption of intolerance against those who did not non-co-operate. This was violence of a subtler type. In spite however of this grave defect, I make bold to say that the propaganda of non-violence checked the outbreak of physical violence which would certainly have broken out, had not non-violent non-co-operation come into being. It is my deliberate conviction that non-violent non-co-operation has given to the people a consciousness of their strength. It has brought to the surface the hidden powers in the people of resistance through suffering. It has caused an awakening among the masses which perhaps no other method could have.

Though therefore non-violent non-co-operation has not brought us *Swaraj*, though it has brought about certain deplorable results and though the institutions that were



sought to be boycotted are still flourishing, in my humble opinion, non-violent non-co-operation, as a means of attaining political freedom, has come to stay and that even its partial success has brought us nearer *Swaraj*. There is no mistaking the fact that the capacity for suffering for the sake of a cause must advance it.

#### A HALT

But we are face to face with a situation that compels us to cry halt. For whilst individuals hold firmly to their belief in non-co-operation, the majority of those who are immediately concerned have practically lost faith in it with the exception of boycott of foreign cloth. Scores of lawyers have resumed practice. Some even regret having ever given it up. Many who had given up Councils, have returned to them and the number of those who believe in Council entry is on the increase. Hundreds of boys and girls who gave up Government schools and colleges, have repented of their action and have returned to them. I hear that Government schools and colleges can hardly cope with the demand for admission. In these circumstances these boycotts cannot be worked as part of the national programme unless the Congress is prepared to do without the classes directly affected. But I hold it to be just as impracticable to keep these classes out of the Congress as it would be now to keep the non-co-operators out. They must both remain in the Congress without either party interfering with or hostilely criticising the other. What is applicable to Hindu-Muslim unity is, I feel, applicable to the unity among different political groups. We must tolerate each other and trust to time to convert the one or the other to the opposite belief. We must go further. We must plead with the Liberals and others who have seceded to rejoin the Congress. If non-

co-operation is suspended, there is no reason why they should keep out. The advance must be from us Congressmen. We must cordially invite them and make it easy for them to come in.

You are perhaps now able to see why I entered into the agreement with the *Swarajists*.

#### FOREIGN CLOTH BOYCOTT

You will observe that one boycott has been retained. Out of regard for the sentiment of an English friend, the word "Boycott" has been changed in the agreement into "refusal to use foreign cloth". There is no doubt a bad odour about the word "Boycott". It usually implies hatred. So far as I am concerned, I have not intended the word to bear any such meaning. The boycott has reference not to British but to foreign cloth. That boycott is not merely a right but a duty. It is as much a duty as boycott of foreign waters would be if they were imported to substitute the waters of the Indian rivers. This, however, is a digression.

What I wanted to say was that the agreement saves and emphasizes the boycott of foreign cloth. For me it is an effective substitute for violent methods. Just as certain acts, such as personal abuse, irritating conduct, lying, causing hurt and murder are symbols of violence, similarly courtesy, inoffensive conduct, truthfulness, etc., are symbols of non-violence. And so to me is boycott of foreign cloth a symbol of non-violence. Revolutionary crime is intended to exert pressure. But it is the insane pressure of anger and ill-will. I contend that non-violent acts exert pressure far more effective than violent acts, for that pressure comes from good will and gentleness. Boycott of foreign cloth exerts such pressure. We import the largest amount of

foreign cloth from Lancashire. It is also by far the largest of all our imports, sugar being next. Britain's chief interest centres round the Lancashire trade with India. It is the one thing more than any other that has ruined the peasant and imposed partial idleness upon him by depriving him of the one supplementary occupation he had. Boycott of foreign cloth is therefore a necessity if he is to live. The plan therefore is not merely to induce the peasant to refuse to buy the cheap and nice looking foreign fabric, but also by teaching him to utilize his spare hours in carding and spinning cotton and getting it woven by the village weavers to dress himself in khaddar so woven and thus to save him the cost of buying foreign and for that matter even Indian mill-made cloth. Thus boycott of foreign cloth by means of hand-spinning and hand-weaving, *i.e.*, khaddar, not only saves the peasant's money but it enables us workers to render social service of a first class order. It brings us into direct touch with the villagers. It enables us to give them real political education and teach them to become self-sustained and self-reliant. Organisation of khaddar is thus infinitely better than co-operative societies or any other form of village organisation. It is fraught with the highest political consequence, because it removes the greatest immoral temptation from Britain's way. I call the Lancashire trade immoral, because it was raised and is sustained on the ruin of millions of India's peasants. And as one immorality leads to another, the many proved immoral acts of Britain are traceable to this one immoral traffic. If therefore this one great temptation is removed from Britain's path by India's voluntary effort, it would be good for India, good for Britain and, as Britain is to-day the predominant world-power, good even for humanity.

I do not endorse the proposition that supply follows demand. On the contrary, demand is often artificially created by unscrupulous vendors. And if a nation is bound, as I hold it is, like individuals to comply with a code of moral conduct, then it must consider the welfare of those whose wants it seeks to supply. It is wrong and immoral for a nation to supply, for instance, intoxicating liquor to those who are addicted to drink. What is true of intoxicants is true of grain or cloth, if the discontinuance of their cultivation or manufacture in the country, to which foreign grain or cloth are exported, results in enforced idleness or penury. These latter hurt a man's soul and body just as much as intoxication. Depression is but excitement upside down and hence equally disastrous in its results and often more so, because we have not yet learnt to regard as immoral or sinful the depression of idleness or penury.

#### BRITAIN'S DUTY

It is then I hold the duty of Great Britain to regulate her exports with due regard to the welfare of India, as it is India's to regulate her imports with due regard to her own welfare. That economics is untrue which ignores or disregards moral values. The extension of the law of non-violence in the domain of economics means nothing less than the introduction of moral values as a factor to be considered in regulating international commerce. And I must confess that my ambition is nothing less than to see international relations placed on a moral basis through India's efforts. I do not despair of cultivation of limited mass non-violence. I refuse to believe that the tendency of human nature is always downward.

The fruition of the boycott of foreign cloth through hand-spinning and khaddar is calculated not only to

bring about a political result of the first magnitude, it is calculated also to make the poorest of India, whether men or women, conscious of their strength and make them partakers in the struggle for India's freedom.

#### FOREIGN *versus* BRITISH

It is hardly necessary now to demonstrate the futility, not to say the violent nature, of boycott of British cloth or better still British goods as so many patriots have suggested. I am considering the boycott purely from the point of view of India's good. All British goods do not harm us. Some goods such as English books we need for our intellectual or spiritual benefit. As regards cloth, it is not merely British cloth that harms us, but all foreign cloth and for that matter to a lesser extent even mill-made cloth injures us. Boycott brought about anyhow of British cloth cannot yield the same results as such boycott brought about by hand-spinning and khaddar. This necessitates exclusion at least of all foreign cloth. The exclusion is not intended as a punishment. It is a necessity of national existence.

#### OBJECTIONS CONSIDERED

But, say the critics, the spinning wheel has not taken, it is not exciting enough, it is an occupation only for women, it means a return to the Middle Ages, it is a vain effort against the majestic march of scientific knowledge for which machinery stands. In my humble opinion India's need is not excitement but solid work. For the millions, solid work itself is excitement and tonic at the same time. The fact is, that we have not given the spinning wheel enough trial. I am sorry to have to say that many of us have not given it a serious thought. Even the members of the All-India Congress Committee have failed to carry out the series of reso-

lutions on hand-spinning, which they themselves have passed from time to time. The majority of us have simply not believed in it. In the circumstances it is hardly just to say that spinning has failed for want of excitement about it. To say that it is merely an old woman's occupation is to ignore facts. Spinning mills are a multiplication of spinning wheels. They are managed by men. It is time that we got out of this superstition that some occupations are beneath the dignity of men. Under normal conditions no doubt spinning will be the occupation of the gentle sex. But the State of the future will always have to keep some men at the spinning wheel so as to make improvements in it within the limitations which, as a cottage industry, it must have. I must inform you that the progress the mechanism of the wheel has made would have been impossible if some of us men had not worked at it and had not thought about it day and night.

#### MACHINERY

I wish, too, you would dismiss from your minds the views attributed to me about machinery. In the first instance I am no more trying to present for national acceptance all my views on machinery than I am presenting the whole of my belief in non-violence. The spinning wheel is itself an exquisite piece of machinery. My head daily bows in reverence to its unknown inventor. What I do resent is the wanton and wicked destruction of the one cottage industry of India that kept the wolf from the doors of thousands of homes scattered over a surface 1,900 miles long and 1,500 miles broad.

#### SPINNING FRANCHISE

You will not now wonder at my passion for the spinning wheel, nor will you wonder why I have ventured

to present it for introduction in the franchise and why Pandit Motilal Nehru and Deshbandhu Das have accepted it on behalf of the *Swaraj* Party. If I had my way, there would be no one on the Congress Register who is unwilling to spin or who would not wear khaddar on all occasions. I am however thankful for what the *Swaraj* Party has accepted. The modification is a concession to weakness or want of faith. But it must serve as a spur to greater effort on the part of those who have full faith in the wheel and khaddar.

#### NO OTHER MESSAGE

I have thus dilated upon the spinning wheel because I have no better or other message for the nation. I know no other effective method for the attainment of *Swaraj* if it is to be by peaceful and legitimate means. As I have already remarked, it is the only substitute for violence that can be accepted by the whole nation. I swear by civil disobedience. But civil disobedience for the attainment of *Swaraj* is an impossibility unless and until we have attained the power of achieving boycott of foreign cloth. You will now easily perceive why I should be a useless guide for the Congress if my views about the spinning-wheel are not acceptable to you. Indeed you would be justified in regarding me, as some friends do, as a hindrance to national progress if you consider me to be wrong in my exposition of the doctrine underlying the spinning wheel. If it does not appeal to your heads as well as your hearts, you will be wanting in your duty in not rejecting my lead. Let it no longer be said, as Lord Willingdon very properly once said of us, that we had not the strength and courage to say 'No'. Indeed your rejection of my proposal, if you do not believe in it, will be a step towards *Swaraj*.

## HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

Hindu-Muslim unity is not less important than the spinning wheel. It is the breath of our life. I do not need to occupy much of your time on this question, because the necessity of it for *Swaraj* is almost universally accepted. I say 'almost' because I know some Hindus and some Mussulmans who prefer the present condition of dependence on Great Britain if they cannot have either wholly Hindu or wholly Mussulman India. Happily their number is small.

I share Maulana Shaukat Ali's robust optimism that the present tension is a mere temporary distemper. The Khilafat agitation, in which Hindus made common cause with their Mussulman brethren and the non-co-operation that followed it, caused an awakening among the hitherto slumbering masses. It has given a new consciousness to the classes as well as the masses. Interested persons who were disappointed during the palmy days of non-co-operation, now that it has lost the charm of novelty, have found their opportunity and are trading upon the religious bigotry or the selfishness of both the communities. The result is written in the history of the feuds of the past two years. Religion has been travestied. Trifles have been dignified by the name of religious tenets which, the fanatics claim, must be observed at any cost. Economic and political causes have been brought into play for the sake of fomenting trouble. The culminating point was reached in Kohat. The tragedy was aggravated by the callous indifference of the local authority. I must not tarry to examine the causes or to distribute the blame. I have not the material for the task even if I was minded for it. Suffice it to say that the Hindu refugees fled for fear of their lives. There is in Kohat an overwhelming Mussulman majority. They



have in so far as is possible under a foreign domination effective political control. It is up to them, therefore, to show that the Hindus are as safe in the midst of their majority as they would be if the whole population of Kohat was Hindu. The Mussulmans of Kohat may not rest satisfied till they have brought back to Kohat every one of the refugees. I hope that the Hindus would not fall into the trap laid for them by the Government and would resolutely decline to go back till the Mussulmans of Kohat have given them full assurances as to their lives and property.

The Hindus can live in the midst of an overwhelming Mussulman majority only if the latter are willing to receive and treat them as friends and equals, just as Mussulmans, if in a minority, must depend for honourable existence in the midst of a Hindu majority on the latter's friendliness. A Government can give protection against thieves and robbers, but not even a *Swaraj* Government will be able to protect people against a wholesale boycott by one community of another. Governments can deal with abnormal situations. When quarrels become a normal thing of life, it is called civil war and parties must fight it out themselves. The present Government being foreign, in reality a veiled military rule, has resources at its command for its protection against any combination we can make and has therefore the power, if it has the will, to deal with our class feuds. But no *Swaraj* Government with any pretension to being a popular Government can possibly be organised and maintained on a war footing. A *Swaraj* Government means a Government established by the free joint will of Hindus, Mussulmans and others. Hindus and Mussulmans, if they desire *Swaraj*, have perforce to settle their differences amicably.

The Unity Conference at Delhi has paved the way for a settlement of religious differences. The Committee of the All Parties' Conference is among other things expected to find a workable and just solution of the political differences not only between Hindus and Mussulmans, but between all classes and all castes, sects or denominations. Our goal must be removal, at the earliest possible moment, of communal or sectional representation. A common electorate must impartially elect its representatives on the sole ground of merit. Our services must be likewise impartially manned by the most qualified men and women. But till that time comes and communal jealousies or preferences become a thing of the past, minorities who suspect the motives of majorities must be allowed their way. The majorities must set the example of self-sacrifice.

#### UNTOUCHABILITY

Untouchability is another hindrance to *Swaraj*. Its removal is just as essential for *Swaraj* as the attainment of Hindu-Muslim unity. This is an essentially Hindu question and Hindus cannot claim or take *Swaraj* till they have restored the liberty of the suppressed classes. They have sunk with the latter's suppression. Historians tell us that the Aryan invaders treated the original inhabitants of Hindusthan precisely as the English invaders treat us, if not much worse. If so, our helotry is a just retribution for our having created an untouchable class. The sooner we remove the blot, the better it is for us Hindus. But the priests tell us that untouchability is a divine appointment. I claim to know something of Hinduism. I am certain that the priests are wrong. It is a blasphemy to say that God set apart any portion of humanity as untouchable. And Hindus who are Congressmen have to see to it

that they break down the barrier at the earliest possible moment. The Vaikom *Satyagrahis* are showing us the way. They are carrying on their battle with gentleness and firmness. They have patience, courage and faith. Any movement, in which these qualities are exhibited, becomes irresistible.

I would, however warn, the Hindu brethren against the tendency which one sees now-a-days of exploiting the suppressed classes for a political end. To remove untouchability is a penance that caste Hindus owe to Hinduism and to themselves. The purification required is not of untouchables but of the so-called superior castes. There is no vice that is special to the untouchables, not even dirt and insanitation. It is our arrogance which blinds us 'superior' Hindus to our own blemishes and which magnifies those of our down-trodden brethren, whom we have suppressed and whom we keep under suppression. Religions like nations are being weighed in the balance. God's grace and revelation are the monopoly of no race or nation. They descend equally upon all who wait upon God. That religion and that nation will be blotted out of the face of the earth which pins its faith to injustice, untruth or violence. God is Light, not darkness. God is Love, not hate. God is Truth, not untruth. God alone is Great. We His creatures are but dust. Let us be humble and recognise the place of the lowliest of His creatures. Krishna honoured Sudama in his rags as he honoured no one else. Love is the root of religion or sacrifice and this perishable body is the root of self or irreligion, says Tulsidas. Whether we win *Swaraj* or not, the Hindus have to purify themselves before they can hope to revive the Vedic philosophy and make it a living reality.

## SWARAJ SCHEME

But the spinning wheel, Hindu-Muslim unity and removal of untouchability are only means to an end. The end we do not know. For me it is enough to know the means. Means and end are convertible terms in my philosophy of life. But I have long professed my conversion to the view pressed upon the public by Babu Bhagavan Das that the public must know the end, not vaguely but precisely. They must know the full definition of *Swaraj*, i.e., the scheme of *Swaraj* which all India wants and must fight for. Happily the Committee appointed by the All Parties' Conference is charged with that mission, and let us hope that the Committee will be able to produce a scheme that will be acceptable to all parties. May I suggest for its consideration the following points:

1. The qualification for the franchise should be neither property nor position but manual work, such, for example, as suggested for the Congress franchise. Literary or property test has proved to be elusive. Manual work gives an opportunity to all who wish to take part in the government and the well-being of the State.

2. The ruinous Military expenditure should be curtailed to the proportion necessary for protection of life and property in normal times.

3. Administration of justice should be cheapened and with that end in view, the final court of appeal should be not in London but in Delhi. Parties to civil suits must be compelled in the majority of cases to refer their disputes to arbitration, the decisions of these *Panchayats* to be final except in cases of corruption or obvious misapplication of law. Multiplicity of intermediate courts should be avoided. Case-law should be abolished and the general procedure

should be simplified. We have slavishly followed the cumbrous and worn out English procedure. The tendency in the Colonies is to simplify the procedure so as to make it easy for litigants to plead their own cases.

4. Revenues from intoxicating liquors and drugs should be abolished.

5. Salaries of the Civil and Military Service should be brought down to a level compatible with the general condition of the country.

6. There should be re-distribution of provinces on a linguistic basis with as complete autonomy as possible for every province for its internal administration and growth.

7. Appointment of a Commission to examine all the monopolies given to foreigners and, subject to the findings of the Commission, full guarantees to be given for all vested rights justly acquired.

8. Full guarantee of their status to the Indian Chiefs without any hindrance from the Central Government, subject to the right of asylum to subjects of these States who, not being offenders against the Penal Code, may seek it in Self-Governing India.

9. Repeal of all arbitrary powers.

10. The highest post to be open to all who may be otherwise fit. Examinations for the Civil and Military Services to be in India.

11. Recognition of complete religious freedom to various denominations subject to mutual forbearance.

12. The official language for provincial governments, legislatures and courts, within a definite period, to be the vernacular of the province; of the Privy Council, the final court of appeal, to be Hindustani; the script to be either Devanagari or Persian. The language of the Central Government and of the Central Legislature to be also

Hindustani. The language of inter-national diplomacy to be English.

I trust you will not laugh at what may appear to you to be extravagance of thought in the foregoing sketch of some of the requirements of *Swaraj* as I would have it. We may not have the power to-day to take or receive or do the things I have mentioned. Have we the will? Let us at least cultivate the desire. Before I leave this highly attractive, because speculative, theme let me assure the Committee in charge of the drafting of a *Swaraj* scheme, that I claim for my suggestion no more attention than it would give to any single individual's. I have incorporated them in my address only to gain greater currency for them than they would perhaps otherwise receive.

#### INDEPENDENCE

The above sketch presupposes the retention of the British connection on perfectly honourable and absolutely equal terms. But I know that there is a section among Congressmen who want, under every conceivable circumstance, complete independence of Britain. They will not have even an equal partnership. In my opinion if the British Government mean what they say and honestly help us to equality, it would be a greater triumph than a complete severance of the British connection. I would therefore strive for *Swaraj* within the Empire but would not hesitate to sever all connection if severance became a necessity through Britain's own fault. I would thus throw the burden of separation on the British people. The better mind of the World desires to-day not absolutely independent States warring one against another, but a federation of friendly inter-dependent States. The consummation of that event may be far off. I want to

make no grand claim for our country. But I see nothing grand or impossible about our expressing our readiness for universal inter-dependence rather than independence. It should rest with Britain to say that she will have no real alliance with India. I desire the ability to be totally independent without asserting the independence. Any scheme that I would frame, while Britain declares her goal about India to be complete equality within the Empire, would be that of alliance and not of independence without alliance. I would urge every Congressman not to be insistent on independence in each and every case, not because there is anything impossible about it, but because it is wholly unnecessary till it has become perfectly manifest that Britain really means subjugation in spite of her declaration to the contrary.

#### THE SWARAJ PARTY

So far, then, I have considered the contents of the agreement and the general questions arising from it. Not much need be said about the status of equality given to the *Swaraj* Party. I wish I could have avoided it, not because the Party is not worthy but because I do not share its views about Council entry. But if I must remain in the Congress and even lead it, I must recognise facts as they are. It was easy enough for me to go out of the Congress or to decline the honour of presiding. But it was not, so I thought and still think, in the interest of the country for me to take that step. The *Swaraj* Party represents, if not a majority, at least a strong and growing minority in the Congress. If I was not to divide the Congress on the issue of its status, I was bound to agree to its conditions so long as they were not in conflict with my conscience. They are not in my opinion unreasonable. The *Swarajists* want to use the name of the

Congress for their policy. A formula had to be found for their doing so without their pledging or binding the No-changers to their policy. One of the ways of doing it was to give it the authority and the responsibility, both financial and executive, with regard to the framing and the prosecution of their policy. The Congress as a whole could not guide that policy without sharing the responsibility. And as I could not take the responsibility, and as I apprehend no No-changer can, I could not be party to shaping the policy, nor could I shape it without my heart in it. And heart can only go where belief is. I knew that the sole authority to the *Swaraj* Party to use the name of the Congress in regard to the Council programme makes somewhat awkward the position of the other parties wishing to join the Congress. But I fear it is inevitable. The *Swaraj* Party cannot be expected to surrender the advantage it possesses. After all it wants the advantage not for itself but for the service of the country. All parties have or can have that ambition or no other. I hope therefore that the others will join the Congress and work from within to affect the course of the country's politics. Dr. Besant has led the way in that direction. I know that she would have many things done otherwise, but she is content to come in hoping to bring round the electorate to her view by working within the Congress. The No-changers can, in my humble opinion, vote for the agreement with a clear conscience. The only national programme jointly to be worked by all the parties is: khaddar, Hindu-Muslim unity and, for the Hindus, removal of untouchability. Is not this after all what they want?

#### PURELY SOCIAL REFORM?

It has been suggested that this programme turns the Congress into a purely social reform organisation.



I beg to differ from that view. Everything that is absolutely essential for *Swaraj* is more than merely social work and must be taken up by the Congress. It is not suggested that the Congress should confine its activity for all time to this work only. But it is suggested that the Congress should for the coming year concentrate the whole of its energy on the work of construction, or as I have otherwise described it, the work of internal growth.

Nor does the agreement exhaust the list of constructive items that the Congress must handle. Those I am about to mention are of the highest importance, but they, being non-contentious and not absolutely essential for *Swaraj* as the foregoing three items, find no mention in the agreement.

#### NATIONAL SCHOOLS

One such is the maintenance of national educational institutions. Probably the public do not know that next to khaddar the running of national educational institutions has been the most successful. These cannot be given up so long as even a few pupils are left. It must be a point of honour with the respective provinces to keep up their colleges and schools. Suspension of non-co-operation should not have any injurious effect on these institutions. On the contrary, greater effort than ever before should be made to maintain and strengthen them. Most provinces have their national schools and colleges. Gujarat alone has a national university maintained at an annual cost of Rs. 1,00,000, and having control of 3 Colleges and 70 Schools with 9,000 pupils. It has acquired its own ground at Ahmedabad and has already spent Rs. 2,05,323 in buildings. Throughout the country, finest and silent work has been done by the non-co-operating students. Theirs is a great and noble sacrifice. From a worldly stand-point

they have perhaps lost the prospect of brilliant careers. I suggest to them however that from the national stand-point they have gained more than they have lost. They left their schools or colleges, because it was through them that the youth of the nation were insulted and humiliated in the Punjab. The first link in the chain of our bondage is forged in these institutions. The corresponding national institutions, however inefficiently managed they may be, are the factories where the first instruments of our freedom are forged. After all, the hope of the future centres round the boys and girls studying in these national institutions. I therefore regard the up-keep of these institutions as a first charge on provincial funds. But these institutions, to be truly national, must be clubs for promoting real Hindu-Muslim unity ; they must be also nurseries for training Hindu boys and girls to regard untouchability as a blot upon Hinduism and a crime against humanity. They should be training schools for expert spinners and weavers. If the Congress retains its belief in the potency of the spinning wheel and khaddar, one has a right to expect these institutions to supply the science of the spinning wheel. They should be also factories for khaddar production. This is not to say that the boys and the girls are not to have any literary training. But I do maintain that the training of the hand and the heart must go hand-in-hand with that of the head. The quality and the usefulness of a national school or college will be measured, not by the brilliance of the literary attainments of its scholars, but by the strength of the national character and deftness in handling the carding bow, the spinning wheel and the loom. Whilst I am most anxious that no national school or college should be closed, I should have not the slightest hesitation in closing down a school or college

that is indifferent to the admission of non-Hindu boys, or that shuts its door against the entry of untouchables, or that has not carding and spinning as an indispeusable part of the training. The time is past when we can be satisfied with the word "national" on the sign-board of the school and the knowledge that it is not affiliated to any Government university, or is not otherwise controlled by the Government. I must also not omit to point out that the tendency in many national institutions still is to neglect the vernaculars and Hindustani. Many teachers have not realised the necessity of imparting instruction through the vernaculars or Hindustani. I rejoice to observe that Sjt. Gangadhar Rao has arranged a meeting of national educationists to exchange experiences on the several points mentioned by me and to evolve, if possible, a general plan of education and action.

#### UNEMPLOYED NON-CO-OPERATORS

This is perhaps the proper place to mention those lawyers who have given up practice, and school-masters and other Government employees who have given up Government service at the call of the nation. I know that there are many such men who find it hard to make the two ends meet. They deserve national support. The Khadi Board and the National Schools and Colleges are the two services that can take in almost an unlimited number of honest and industrious men, who are willing to learn and labour and are satisfied with a modest allowance. I observe a tendency not to accept any remuneration for national service. The desire to serve without remuneration is praiseworthy, but all cannot satisfy it. Every labourer is worthy of his hire. No country can produce thousands of unpaid whole-time workers. We must therefore develop an atmosphere in which a patriot would consider it an

honour to serve the country and accept an allowance for such service.

#### INTOXICANTS

Another item of national importance is the liquor and the opium traffic. Had the wave of enthusiasm that swept across the country in 1921 in the cause of temperance remained non-violent, we would to-day have witnessed a progressive improvement. But unfortunately our picketing degenerated into violence, veiled when it was not open. Picketing had therefore to be abandoned and the liquor-shops and opium-dens began to flourish as before. But you will be pleased to hear that the temperance work has not died out altogether. Many workers are still continuing their quiet and self-less service in the cause of temperance. We must, however, realise that we would not be able to eradicate the evil till we have *Swaraj*. It is no matter of pride to us that our children are being educated out of the revenue derived from this immoral source. I would almost forgive the Council-entry by Congressmen if they would boldly sweep out this revenue, even though education may have to be starved. Nothing of the kind should happen if they will insist on a corresponding reduction in the Military expenditure.

#### BENGAL REPRESSION

You will observe that in the foregoing paragraphs I have confined myself to the internal developments.

But the external circumstances, and among them chiefly the acts of our rulers, are affecting our destiny no less surely, though it may be adversely, than the internal development. We may turn them to advantage if we will, or we may succumb to them to our disadvantage. The latest act of the rulers is the repression commenced in Bengal. The All Parties' Conference condemned it in no

uncertain terms. The Conference had hesitation in saying that the blow was aimed at the Bengal *Swaraj* Party. But I have none. I have been to Calcutta and had the opportunity of meeting men representing a variety of opinion and I came to the conclusion that the blow was aimed at the *Swaraj* Party. The opinion is confirmed by the speeches since delivered by Lords Lytton and Reading. The defence they have offered is wholly unconvincing. Such a defence is possible only in a place like India where public opinion counts for little or nothing. Lord Lytton's conditions of release are an insult to our intelligence. Their Excellencies beg the question when they tell us that the situation warranted the Ordinance and the action under the Regulation of 1818. The national contention is :

1. That the situation they describe has not been proved to exist.
2. That assuming that the situation does exist, the remedy is worse than the disease ;
3. That the ordinary law contains enough powers for dealing with the situation ; and lastly,
4. That even if extraordinary powers were necessary they should have been taken from the legislature which is of their own creation.

The speeches of Their Excellencies evade these issues altogether. The nation which has had considerable experience of unsupported statements of the Government, will not accept them as gospel truth. Their Excellencies know that we cannot and will not believe their statements, not because they are wilfully untruthful but because the sources of their information have often been discovered to be tainted. Their assurances are therefore a mockery of the people. The speeches are almost a challenge to us to do our worst. But we must not be irritated or be

impatient. Repression, if it does not cow us down, if it does not deter us from our purpose, can but hasten the advent of *Swaraj*; for it puts us on our mettle and evokes the spirit of self-sacrifice and courage in the face of danger. Repression does for a true man or a nation what fire does for gold. In 1921 we answered repression with civil disobedience and invited the Government to do its worst. But to-day we are obliged to eat the humble pie. We are not ready for civil disobedience. We can but prepare for it. Preparation for civil disobedience means discipline, self-restraint, a non-violent but resisting spirit, cohesion and above all scrupulous and willing obedience to the known laws of God and such laws of man as are in furtherance of God's laws. But unfortunately we have neither discipline nor self-restraint enough for our purpose; we are either violent or our non-violence is unresisting; we have not enough cohesion and the laws that we obey, whether of God or man, we obey compulsorily. As between Hindus and Mussulmans we witness a daily defiant breach of laws both of God and man. This is no atmosphere for civil disobedience—the one matchless and invincible weapon at the disposal of the oppressed. The alternative is undoubtedly violence. We seem to have the atmosphere for it. Hindu-Muslim fights are our training for it. And those who believe that India's deliverance lies through violence are entitled to gloat over the free fights that take place between us. But I say to those who believe in the cult of violence: "You are retarding India's progress. If you have any pity or friendly feeling for the starving millions, know that your violence will do them no service. Those whom you seek to depose are better armed and infinitely better organised than you are. You may not care for your own lives, but you dare not disregard those

of your countrymen who have no desire to die a martyr's death. You know that this Government believes in Jallianwala Bagh massacres as a legitimate means of self-defence. Whatever may be true of other countries, there is no chance of the cult of violence flourishing in this country. India is admittedly the best repository and exponent of non-violence. Will you not better devote your lives if you sacrifice them in the cause of non-violence ?"

I know, however, that my appeal to the violent revolutionaries will be just as fruitless as any such appeal to the violent and anarchical Government is likely to be.

We must, therefore, find the remedy and demonstrate to both the violent Government and the violent revolutionaries that there is a force that is more effective than their violence.

#### REPRESSION A SYMPTOM

I regard this repression as a chronic symptom of a chronic disease. The European dominance and Asiatic subjection is the formula. Sometimes it is stated still more cryptically as *White versus Black*. Kipling miscalled the white man's yoke as the "white man's burden". In the Malaya Peninsula the colour bar that was thought to be temporary has now almost become a permanent institution. The Mauritius planter must get Indian labour without let or hindrance. The Kenya Europeans successfully lord it over Indians who have a prior right to be there. The Union of South Africa would to-day drive out every Indian if it safely could, in total disregard of past obligations. In all these cases the Government of India and the Imperial Government are not helpless ; they are unwilling, or not so insistent as they ought to be on the protection of Indian settlers.

The attempt to crush the indomitable spirit of the Akalis is a symptom of the same disease. They have

poured their blood like water for the sake of a cause they hold as dear as life itself. They may have erred. If they have, it is they who have bled in the process. They have hurt no one else. Nankana Saheb, Guruka Bagh, and Jaito will bear witness to their courage and their mute sufferings and martyrdom. But the Governor of the Punjab is reported to have vowed that he will crush the Akalis.

One hears that repression is crushing the Burmese spirit.

Egypt fares no better than we do. A mad Egyptian kills a British officer—certainly a detestable crime. The punishment is not only a detestable crime but it is an outrage upon humanity. Egypt has nearly lost all it got. A whole nation has been mercilessly punished for the crime of one man. It may be that the murder had the sympathy of the Egyptians. Would that justify terrorism by a power well able to protect its interests without it?

The repression in Bengal is therefore not an extraordinary thing. We must treat its periodic eruption in some shape or other, or in some province or other, as our normal condition till we come to our own.

#### NEED FOR SANCTION

The Congress therefore, to be worthy of its trust, must devise a sanction to back its demands. Before we can forge the sanction, we Hindus, Mussulmans, Christians, Sikhs, Parsis, etc., must unite and so should *Swarajists*, *No-changers*, *Liberals*, *Home Rulers*, *Muslim Leaguers* and others. If we can but speak with a united voice and know our own mind, it would be well. If we can develop the power to keep foreign cloth from our land, it would be better. We are ready then for the sanction.



## MY FAITH

Let me state my faith : As a Congressman wishing to keep the Congress intact, I advise suspension of non-co-operation, for I see that the nation is not ready for it. But as an individual, I cannot—will not—do so as long as the Government remains what it is. It is not merely a policy with me, it is an article of faith. Non-co-operation and civil disobedience are but different branches of the same tree called *Satyagraha*. It is my *Kalpadrūm*—my *Jam-i-Jam*—the Universal Provider. *Satyagraha* is search for Truth ; and God is Truth. *Ahimsa* or non-violence is the light that reveals that Truth to me. *Swaraj* for me is part of that Truth. This *Satyagraha* did not fail me in South Africa, Kheda, or Champaran and in a host of other cases I could mention. It excludes all violence or hate. Therefore, I cannot and will not hate Englishmen. Nor will I bear their yoke. I must fight unto death the unholy attempt to impose British methods and British institutions on India. But I combat the attempt with non-violence. I believe in the capacity of India to offer non-violent battle to the English rulers. The experiment has not failed. It has succeeded but not to the extent we had hoped and desired. I do not despair. On the contrary I believe that India will come to her own in the near future and that only through *Satyagraha*. The proposed suspension is part of the experiment. Non-co-operation need never be resumed if the programme sketched by me can be fulfilled. Non-violent non-co-operation in some form or other, whether through the Congress or without it, will be resumed if the programme fails. I have repeatedly stated that *Satyagraha* never fails, and that one perfect *Satyagrahi* is enough to vindicate Truth. Let us all strive to be perfect *Satyagrahis*. The striving does not require any quality unattainable by the lowliest among us. For *Satyagraha* is an attribute of the spirit within. It is latent in every one of us. Like *Swaraj* it is our birthright. Let us know it.

BANDE MATARAM.

# SALT SATYAGRAHA

The situation in India was growing from bad to worse. Congress itself began to adopt a more aggressive attitude. The term Dominion Status began to lose its charm and the cry of independence was raised. The composition of the Simon Commission was justly considered as an affront to the self-respect of the Indian people. Its boycott was thorough and effective. The distrust of the people of the *bona fides* of the British Government became more pronounced. Men for whose moderation and wise judgment the authorities had respect, began to declaim loudly that an assurance reiterating the goal of British policy in India should, among other things, be immediately given. The situation in India was so serious that the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, thought it necessary to proceed to England to confer with the Cabinet and induce them to adopt a course which would, to some extent, ease the tension in India.

His Excellency Lord Irwin returned to India on 25th October 1929, and on the 31st issued an important statement declaring the goal of British policy in India. "I am authorised, on behalf of His Majesty's Government," said His Excellency, "to state clearly that in their judgment it is implicit in the Declaration of 1917 that the natural issue of India's constitutional progress, as there contemplated, is the attainment of Dominion Status." The leaders of all parties, including Mr. Gandhi, met at once in Delhi and issued a statement approving Government's intentions in general. But when His Excellency met some select leaders, including Gandhiji, Pandit Motilal, Mr. Patel, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jinnah on the 23rd December at the Viceregal House at Delhi to discuss the personnel and other matters connected with the R. T. C., the Conference broke down after three hours' discussion. On behalf of the Congress Party, the view was expressed that unless previous assurances were given by His Majesty's Government that the purpose of the Conference was to draft a scheme for Dominion Status which His Majesty's Government would undertake to support, there would be grave difficulty about Congress participation. His Excellency made it plain that the Conference was designed to elicit the greatest possible measure of agreement for the final proposals which it would be the duty of His Majesty's Government to submit to Parliament and that it was impossible for him or for His Majesty's Government in any way to prejudice the action of the Conference or to restrict the liberty of Parliament. Gandhiji and the Viceroy could not agree. No wonder when the Congress met at Lahore, the atmosphere was full of excitement. Pandit Jawaharlal's presidential address was an impassioned plea for independence. Mr. Gandhi himself introduced the independence resolution in the Subjects Committee "as the root of the future Congress work".

## DOMINION STATUS *VERSUS* INDEPENDENCE

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Soon after the Sessions of the Lahore Congress 1929, Gandhi explained the Independence Resolution in a communication to the *New York World* in its issue of January 9: "The World should realise," he wrote, "that as Congressional representatives, Pandit Motilal Nehru, Leader of the Nationalists in the Legislative Assembly, and I could only treat the Viceregal pronouncement about Dominion Status in India as a response to the Calcutta Congress Resolution of 1928."

We were bound therefore in pursuance of that resolution to press for a clear declaration that the proposed Round Table Conference would consider only ways and means of framing a scheme for a Dominion Status Constitution and no other. This the Viceroy, Lord Irwin, could not do. While, therefore, we appreciated his good efforts and his difficulties, we had no course left open but to decline to have Congress represented at the proposed Conference. The Conference, so far as Congress was concerned, having miscarried, the independence resolution was inevitable. But the independence resolution need frighten nobody. I had repeatedly declared that for me, as for all other Congressmen, Dominion Status could mean only virtual independence, that is, partnership at will for mutual benefit and to be dissolved at the instance of either partner. It only clears the issue, especially after Secretary of State for India, Wedgwood Benn's unfortunate statement that India already had a Dominion Status in action.

The real cause for satisfaction to lovers of peace consists in the fact that through the full debate, Congress supported methods of non-violence and truth to the

exclusion of other methods. Civil disobedience is a dynamic expression of non-violence. It is undoubtedly fraught with great danger and difficulties, but infinitely less so than the present danger of unbridled but secret violence breaking out in many parts of India owing to understandable and pardonable impatience on the part of many youths. Responsibility for initiating civil disobedience rests on me and I am not likely rashly to embark upon it. At the same time I must confess that I shall not hesitate to run a certain minimum of risk which is inevitable in any struggle for freedom. The risk for prolonging the present agony caused by the realized slavery here is any day much greater than I am ever likely to run.

## THE ELEVEN POINTS

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Gandhiji justified the break with the Viceroy (Lord Irwin) and vindicated his attitude as well as that of Pandit Motilal Nehru in regard to their insistence on the Congress demand. Later on commenting on the Viceroy's address to the Assembly, Mahatma Gandhi cleared the issue before the country in these words and offered the following conditions for settlement in the course of an article in *Young India* of January 30, 1930:

I make the same 'childish' offer (almost) to Lord Irwin that I had the honour of making to Lord Reading. Let him and the British Cabinet initiate the following reforms:

1. Total prohibition.
2. Reduction of the ratio to 1s. 4d.
3. Reduction of the land revenue to at least 50 per cent. and making it subject to legislative control.
4. Abolition of the salt tax.
5. Reduction of the Military expenditure to at least 50 per cent. to begin with.
6. Reduction of the salaries of the higher grade service to one half or less so as to suit the reduced revenue.
7. Protective tariff on foreign cloth.
8. The passage of the Coastal Traffic Reservation Bill.
9. Discharge of all political prisoners, save those condemned for murder or the attempt thereof by the ordinary judicial tribunal; withdrawal of all political prosecutions; abrogation of Section 124-A; the Regulation of 1818

and the like ; and permission to all the Indian exiles to return.

10. Abolition of C.I.D. or its popular control.

11. Issue of licenses to use fire-arms for self-defence subject to popular control.

This is by no means an exhaustive list of pressing needs. But let the Viceroy satisfy these very simple but vital needs of India. He will then hear no talk of civil disobedience and the Congress will heartily participate in any Conference where there is perfect freedom of expression and demand.

## LETTERS TO LORD IRWIN

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The situation was so tense that the arrest of Mahatma Gandhi was expected any day. As on a previous occasion, he gave advice to his followers in anticipation of the inevitable arrest. The next step was the famous letter addressed by Gandhiji to Lord Irwin. Just as he began non-co-operation after giving due notice to Lord Reading, so now before embarking on the Civil Disobedience campaign, Gandhiji wrote what was called his "ultimatum" to the Viceroy. This letter was personally delivered to Lord Irwin by Mr. Reginald Reynold, an English youth and an inmate of the Ashram on Tuesday the 4th March, 1930 :

### THE FIRST LETTER

Dear Friend,—Before embarking on civil disobedience and taking the risk I have dreaded to take all these years, I would fair approach you and find a way out. My personal faith is absolutely clear. I cannot intentionally hurt anything that lives, much less fellow-human beings even though they may do the greatest wrong to me and mine. Whilst therefore I hold British rule to be a curse, I do not intend to harm a single Englishman or any legitimate interest he may have in India.

I must not be misunderstood. Though I hold the British rule in India to be a curse, I do not therefore consider Englishmen in general to be worse than any other people on earth. I have the privilege of claiming many Englishmen as dearest friends. Indeed much that I have learnt of the evil of British rule is due to the writings of frank and courageous Englishmen who have not hesitated to tell the unpalatable truth about that rule.

And why do I regard the British rule as a curse ?

It has impoverished the dumb millions by a system of progressive exploitation and by a ruinously expensive military and civil administration which the country can never afford.

It has reduced us politically to serfdom. It has sapped the foundations of our culture. And, by the policy of disarmament, it has degraded us spiritually. Lacking inward strength, we have been reduced by all but universal disarmament to a state bordering on cowardly helplessness.

In common with many of my countrymen, I had hugged the fond hope that the proposed Round Table Conference might furnish a solution. But when you said plainly that you could not give any assurance that you or the British Cabinet would pledge yourselves to support a scheme of full Dominion Status, the Round Table Conference could not possibly furnish the solution for which vocal India is consciously, and the dumb millions unconsciously, thirsting. Needless to say there never was any question of Parliament's verdict being anticipated. Instances are not wanting of the British Cabinet, in anticipation of Parliamentary verdict, having pledged itself to a particular policy.

The Delhi interview having miscarried, there was no option for Pandit Motilal Nehru and me but to take steps to carry out the solemn resolution of the Congress arrived at in Calcutta at its Session of 1928.

But the resolution of Independence should cause no alarm if the word "Dominion Status", mentioned in your announcement, has been used in its accepted sense. For, has it not been admitted by responsible British statesmen that Dominion Status is virtual Independence? What



however, I fear, is that there never has been any intention of granting such Dominion Status to India in the immediate future.

But this is all past history. Since the announcement many events have happened which show unmistakably the trend of British policy.

It seems as clear as daylight that responsible British statesmen do not contemplate any alteration in British policy that might adversely affect Britain's commerce with India or require impartial and close scrutiny of Britain's transactions with India. If nothing is done to end the process of exploitation, India must be bled with an ever increasing speed. The Finance Member regards as a settled fact the 1s. 6d. ratio which, by a stroke of the pen, drains India of a few crores. And when a serious attempt is being made through a civil form of direct action to unsettle this fact among many others, even you cannot help appealing to the wealthy landed classes to help you to crush that attempt in the name of an order that grinds India to atoms. Unless those who work in the name of the nation understand and keep before all concerned the motive that lies behind the craving for Independence, there is every danger of independence itself coming to us so charged as to be of no value to those toiling voiceless millions for whom it is sought and for whom it is worth taking. It is for that reason that I have been recently telling the public what independence should really mean.

Let me put before you some of the salient points. The terrific pressure of land revenue which furnishes a large part of the total revenue, must undergo considerable modification in Independent India. Even the much

vaunted permanent settlement benefits a few rich Zamindars, not the ryots. The ryot has remained as helpless as ever. He is a mere tenant at will. Not only then has land revenue to be considerably reduced, but the whole revenue system has to be so revised as to make the ryot's good its primary concern. But the British system seems to be designed to crush the very life out of him. Even the salt he must use to live is so taxed as to make the burden fall heaviest on him if only because of the heartless impartiality of its incidence. The tax shows itself still more burdensome on the poor man when it is remembered that salt is the one thing he must eat more than the rich man both individually and collectively. The drink and drug revenue too is derived from the poor. It saps the foundations both of their health and morals. It is defended under the false plea of individual freedom, but in reality it is maintained for its own sake. The ingenuity of the authors of the Reforms of 1919 transferred this revenue to the so-called responsible part of dyarchy so as to throw the burden of prohibition on it, thus from the beginning rendering it powerless for good. If the unhappy Minister wipes out this revenue, he must starve education, since in the existing circumstances he has no new source of replacing that revenue. If the weight of taxation has crushed the poor from above, the destruction of the central supplementary industry, *i.e.*, hand-spinning, has undermined their capacity for producing wealth.

The tale of India's ruination is not complete without a reference to the liabilities incurred in her name. Sufficient has been recently said about these in the public Press. It must be the duty of a free India to subject all

liabilities to the strictest investigation and repudiate those that may be adjudged by an impartial tribunal to be unjust and unfair. The iniquities sampled above are maintained in order to carry on a foreign administration, demonstrably the most expensive in the world. Take your own salary. It is over Rs. 21,000 per month besides many other indirect additions. The British Prime Minister gets £5,000 per year, *i.e.*, over Rs. 5,400 per month at the present rate of exchange. You are getting over Rs. 700 per day against India's average income of less than annas 2 per day. The Prime Minister gets Rs. 180 per day against Great Britain's average income of nearly Rs. 2 per day. Thus you are getting much over 5,000 times India's average income. The British Prime Minister is getting only 90 times Britain's average income. On bended knee I ask you to ponder over this phenomenon. I have taken a personal illustration to drive home a painful truth. I have too great a regard for you as a man to wish to hurt your feelings. I know that you do not need the salary you get. Probably the whole of your salary goes for charity. But a system that provides for such an arrangement deserves to be summarily scrapped. What is true of the Viceregal salary is true generally of the whole administration.

A radical cutting down of the revenue, therefore, depends upon an equally radical reduction in expenses of administration. This means a transformation of the scheme of Government. This transformation is impossible without independence. Hence, in my opinion, the spontaneous demonstration of 26th January, in which hundreds of thousands of villagers instinctively participated. To them Independence means deliverance from the killing weight. Not one of the great British political

parties, it seems to me, is prepared to give up the Indian spoils to which Great Britain helps herself from day to day, often in spite of the unanimous opposition of Indian opinion.

Nevertheless if India is to live as a nation, if the slow death by starvation of her people is to stop, some remedy must be found for immediate relief. The proposed Conference is certainly not the remedy. It is not a matter of carrying conviction by argument. The matter resolves itself into one of matching forces. Conviction or no conviction, Great Britain would defend her Indian commerce and interests by all the forces at her command. India must consequently evolve force enough to free herself from that embrace of death.

It is common cause that, however disorganised and for the time being insignificant it may be, the party of violence is gaining ground and making itself felt. Its end is the same as mine. But I am convinced that it cannot bring the desired relief to the dumb millions. And the conviction is growing deeper and deeper in me that nothing but unadulterated non-violence can check the organised violence of the British Government. Many think that non-violence is not an active force. My experience, limited though it undoubtedly is, shows that non-violence can be an intensely active force. It is my purpose to set in motion that force as well against the organised violence force of the British rule as the unorganised violence force of the growing party of violence. To sit still would be to give rein to both the forces above mentioned. Having unquestioning and immovable faith in the efficacy of non-violence as I know it, it would be sinful on my part to wait any longer. This non-violence will be expressed through

civil disobedience for the moment confined to the inmates of the *Satyagraha* Ashram, but ultimately designed to cover all those who choose to join the movement with its obvious limitations.

I know that in embarking on non-violence, I shall be running what might fairly be termed a mad risk, but the victories of truth have never been won without risks, often of the gravest character. Conversion of a nation that has consciously or unconsciously preyed upon another far more numerous, far more ancient and no less cultured than itself is worth any amount of risk.

I have deliberately used the word conversion. For my ambition is no less than to convert the British people through non-violence and thus make them see the wrong they have done to India. I do not seek to harm your people. I want to serve them even as I want to serve my own. I believe that I have always served them. I served them up to 1919 blindly. But when my eyes were opened, and I conceived non-co-operation, the object still was to serve them. I employed the same weapon that I have in all humility successfully used against the dearest members of my family. If I have equal love for your people with mine, it will not long remain hidden. It will be acknowledged by them even as members of my family acknowledged it after they had tried me for several years. If people join me as I expect they will, the sufferings they will undergo, unless the British nation sooner retraces its steps, will be enough to melt the stoniest hearts.

The plan through civil disobedience will be to combat such evils as I have sampled out. If we want to sever the British connection, it is because of such evils. When they are removed, the path becomes easy. Then the way to friendly negotiation

will be open. If the British commerce with India is purified of greed, you will have no difficulty in recognising our independence. I respectfully invite you then to pave the way for an immediate removal of those evils and thus open a way for a real conference between equals, interested only in promoting the common good of mankind through voluntary fellowship and in arranging terms of mutual help and commerce suited to both. You have unnecessarily laid stress upon the communal problems that unhappily affect this land. Important though they undoubtedly are for the consideration of any scheme of government, they have little bearing on the greater problems which are above communities and which affect them all equally. But if you cannot see your way to deal with these evils and my letter makes no appeal to your heart, on the 11th day of this month I shall proceed with such co-workers of the Ashram as I can take to disregard the provisions of Salt laws. I regard this tax to be the most iniquitous of all from the poor man's stand-point. As the independence movement is essentially for the poorest in the land, the beginning will be made with this evil. The wonder is, that we have submitted to the cruel monopoly for so long. It is, I know, open to you to frustrate my design by arresting me. I hope there will be tens of thousands ready in a disciplined manner to take up the work after me, and in the act of disobeying the Salt Act lay themselves open to the penalties of a law that should never have disfigured the Statute-book.

I have no desire to cause you unnecessary embarrassment or any at all so far as I can help. If you think that there is any substance in my letter, and if you will care to discuss matters with me, and if to that end you would like me to postpone publication of this letter, I shall

gladly refrain on receipt of a telegram to that effect soon after this reaches you. You will however do me the favour not to deflect me from my course unless you can see your way to conform to the substance of this letter.

This letter is not in any way intended as a threat, but is a simple and sacred duty peremptory on a civil resister. Therefore I am having it specially delivered by a young English friend, who believes in the Indian cause and is a full believer in non-violence and whom Providence seems to have sent me as it were for the very purpose.

I remain,  
Your Sincere Friend,  
M. K. GANDHI.

## THE SECOND LETTER

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The following is the text of Gandhiji's second letter to Lord Irwin drafted on the eve of his arrest:

Dear Friend,

God willing, it is my intention on . . . to set out for Dharsana and reach there with my companions on . . . and demand possession of the Salt Works. The public have been told that Dharsana is private property. This is mere camouflage. It is as effectively under Government control as the Viceroy's House. Not a pinch of salt can be removed without the previous sanction of the authorities.

It is possible for you to prevent this raid, as it has been playfully and mischievously called in three ways :

1. by removing the salt tax ;
2. by arresting me and my party unless the country can, as I hope it will, replace every one taken away ;
3. by sheer *goondaism* unless every head broken is replaced, as I hope it will.

It is not without hesitation that the step has been decided upon. I had hoped that the Government would fight the civil resisters in a civilised manner. I could have had nothing to say if, in dealing with the civil resisters, the Government had satisfied itself with applying the ordinary processes of law. Instead, whilst the known leaders have been dealt with more or less according to the legal formality, the rank-and-file has been often savagely



and in some cases even indecently assaulted. Had these been isolated cases, they might have been overlooked. But accounts have come to me from Bengal, Behar, Utkal, U. P., Delhi, and Bombay confirming the experiences of Gujarat, of which I have ample evidence at my disposal. In Karachi, Peshawar, and Madras the firing would appear to have been unprovoked and unnecessary. Bones have been broken, private parts have been squeezed for the purpose of making volunteers give up, to the Government valueless, to the volunteers precious, salt. At Mathura, an assistant magistrate is said to have snatched the national flag from a ten year old boy. The crowd that demanding restoration of the flag thus illegally seized is reported to have been mercilessly beaten back. That the flag was subsequently restored betrayed a guilty conscience. In Bengal there seem to have been only a few prosecutions and assaults about salt, but unthinkable cruelties are said to have been practised in the act of snatching flags from volunteers. Paddy fields are reported to have been burnt, eatables forcibly taken. A vegetable market in Gujarat has been raided, because the dealers would not sell vegetables to officials. These acts have taken place in front of crowds who, for the sake of Congress mandate, have submitted without retaliation. I ask you to believe the accounts given by men pledged to truth. Repudiation even by high officials has, as in the Bardoli case, often proved false. The officials, I regret to have to say, have not hesitated to publish falsehoods to the people even during the last five weeks. I take the following samples from Government notices issued from Collector's offices in Gujarat :

1. Adults use five pounds of salt per year, therefore pay three annas per year as tax. . . . If Government removed the

monopoly, people will have to pay higher prices and in addition make good to the Government the loss sustained by the removal of the monopoly. . . . The salt you take from the sea-shore is not eatable, therefore the Government destroys it.

2. Mr. Gandhi says that Government has destroyed hand-spinning in this country, whereas everybody knows that this is not true, because throughout the country there is not a village where hand-spinning of cotton is not going on. Moreover in every province cotton spinners are shown superior methods and are provided with better instruments at less price and are thus helped by Government.

3. Out of every five rupees of the debt that the Government has incurred, rupees four have been beneficially spent.

I have taken these three sets of statements from three different leaflets. I venture to suggest that every one of these statements is demonstrably false. The daily consumption of salt by an adult is three times the amount stated and therefore the poll tax and the salt tax undoubtedly is at least 9 as. per head per year. And this tax is levied from man, woman, child and domestic cattle irrespective of age and health.

It is a wicked falsehood to say that every village has a spinning wheel and that the spinning movement is in any shape or form encouraged or supported by the Government. Financiers can better dispose of the falsehood that four out of every five rupees of the public debt is used for the benefit of the public. But those falsehoods are mere samples of what people know is going on in every-day contact with the Government. Only the other day a Gujarati poet, a brave man, was convicted on perjured official evidence in spite of his emphatic statement that at the time mentioned he was sleeping soundly in another place.

Now for instances of official inactivities. Liquor dealers have assaulted pickets admitted by officials to

have been peaceful and sold liquor in contravention of regulations. The officials have taken no notice either of the assaults or the illegal sales of liquor. As to the assaults, though they are known to everybody, they may take shelter under the plea that they have received no complaints.

And now you have sprung upon the country a Press Ordinance surpassing any hitherto known in India. You have found a short cut through the law's delay in the matter of the trial of Bhagat Singh and others by doing away with the ordinary procedure. Is it any wonder if I call all these official activities and inactivities a veiled form of Martial Law? Yet this is only the fifth week of the struggle.

Before then the reign of terrorism that has just begun overwhelms India, I feel that I must take a bolder step and if possible divert your wrath in a cleaner if more drastic channel. You may not know the things that I have described. You may not even now believe in them. I can but invite your serious attention to them.

Any way I feel that it would be cowardly on my part not to invite you to disclose to the full the leonine paws of authority, so that the people who are suffering tortures and destruction of their property may not feel that I, who had perhaps been the chief party inspiring them to action that has brought to right light the Government in its true colours, had left any stone unturned to work out the *Satyagraha* programme as fully as it was possible under given circumstances.

For, according to the science of *Satyagraha*, the greater the repression and lawlessness on the part of

authority, the greater should be the suffering courted by the victims. Success is the certain result of suffering of the extremest character voluntarily undergone.

I know the dangers attendant upon the methods adopted by me. But the country is not likely to mistake my meaning. I say what I mean and think. And I have been saying for the last fifteen years in India, and outside for twenty years more, and repeat now that the only way to conquer violence is through non-violence pure and undefiled. I have said also that every violent act, word and even thought interferes with the progress of non-violent action. If, in spite of such repeated warnings people will resort to violence, I must disown responsibility save such as inevitably attaches to every human being for the acts of every other human being. But the question of responsibility apart, I dare not postpone action on any cause whatsoever if non-violence is the force the seers of the world have claimed it to be and if I am not to belie my own extensive experience of its working.

But I would fain avoid the further step. I would therefore ask you to remove the tax which many of your illustrious countrymen have condemned in unmeasured terms and which, as you could not have failed to observe, has evoked universal protest and resentment expressed in civil disobedience. You may condemn civil disobedience as much as you like. Will you prefer violent revolt to civil disobedience? If you say, as you have said, that the civil disobedience must end in violence, history will pronounce the verdict that the British Government not bearing because not understanding non-violence, goaded human nature to violence which it could understand and

deal with. But in spite of the goading I shall hope that God will give the people of India wisdom and strength to withstand every temptation and provocation to violence.

If therefore you cannot see your way to remove the salt tax and remove the prohibition on private salt-making, I must reluctantly commence the march adumbrated in the opening paragraph of my letter.

I am,

Your Sincere Friend,

M. K. GANDHI.

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GANDHIJI during the march to Dandi



GANDHIJI: the latest Portrait.

## LAST MESSAGE AND TESTAMENT

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The Viceroy's reply, as might be expected, was curt and brief expressing His Excellency's regret that Mr. Gandhi contemplates "a course of action which is clearly bound to involve violation of the law and danger to the public peace". Commenting on this, Mr. Gandhi wrote in *Young India* :

On bended knees I asked for bread and I received stone instead. The English nation responds only to force and I am not surprised by the Viceregal reply. The only public peace the nation knows is the peace of the public prison. India is a vast prison house. I repudiate this (British) law and regard it as my sacred duty to break the mournful monotony of compulsory peace that is choking the heart of the nation for want of free vent.

Concluding what he called his last message and testament, Mahatma Gandhi, addressing the thousands that had gathered on the sands of the Sabarmati on the 11th March 1930, said :

Our case is strong, our means purest; and God is with us. There is no defeat (for the *Satyagrahis* till they give up the truth. I pray for the success of the battle which begins to-morrow.



## THE GREAT MARCH

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True to his declaration, on the morning of the 12th March 1930, Mahatma Gandhi with his 79 volunteers, all students of the Vidyapith, left the Ashram on the campaign of civil disobedience. The destination was Dandi near the coast, but Gandhiji spoke at every halting station addressing thousands who had gathered from far and near. In the course of his appeal to the gathering assembled at Borsad, the Mahatma said :

The British rule in India has brought about moral, material, cultural and spiritual ruination of this great country. I regard this rule as a curse. I am out to destroy this system of Government.

I have sung the tune of "God Save the King" and have taught others to sing it. I was a believer in the politics of petitions, deputations and friendly negotiations. But all these have gone to dogs. I know that these are not the ways to bring this Government round.

Continuing, Gandhiji said :

"Sedition has become my religion. Ours is a non-violent battle. We are not out to kill anybody, but it is our *dharma* to see that the curse of this Government is blotted out."

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## TURNING THE SEARCH-LIGHT INWARD

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It must not be supposed that the speeches are all an indictment on the Government. Most of them were addressed to the conscience of the people to rid themselves of impurities of thought and conduct. The one delivered at Bhatgam on the 29th March 1930 was particularly moving. Mr. Gandhi himself was visibly moved as he spoke :

I have been asked to deliver a sermon. I have little fitness for the task. But to-night I propose to make a confession and turn the search-light inward. You may call this introspection a sermon if you like.

India in general and you in particular are acquainted with one part of my nature. Moreover more than in any other part of Gujarat in this district are concentrated workers who have come in closest touch with me. They know this habit of mine from personal experience.

### A PAINFUL OPERATION

I am plain-spoken. I have not hesitated to describe the mountain-high faults of the Government in appropriate language. And I have not hesitated often to picture as mountain-high our faults appearing to us as trifling. You know the common rule is to see our own big lapses as tiny nothings. And when we do realise our blemishes somewhat, we at once pass them on to the broad shoulders of God and say: "He will take care of them"; and then with safety thus assured we proceed from lapse to lapse. But as you know I have disregarded this rule for years. So doing, I have hurt the feelings of many friends and even lost some of them. To-night I have to repeat the painful operation.

Only this morning at the prayer time I was telling my companions that as we had entered the district in which we were to offer civil disobedience, we should insist on greater purification and intenser dedication. I warned them that as the district was more organised and contained many intimate co-workers, there was every likelihood of our being pampered. I warned them against succumbing to their pampering. We are not angels. We are very weak, easily tempted. There are many lapses to our debit. God is great. Even to-day some were discovered. One defaulter confessed his lapse himself whilst I was brooding over the lapses of the pilgrims. I discovered that my warning was given none too soon. The local workers had ordered milk from Surat to be brought in a motor lorry and they had incurred other expenses which I could not justify. I therefore spoke strongly about them. But that did not allay my grief. On the contrary it increased with the contemplation of the wrongs done.

#### THE RIGHT TO CRITICISE

In the light of these discoveries, what right had I to write to the Viceroy the letter in which I have severely criticised his salary which is more than 5,000 times our average income? How could he possibly do justice to that salary? And how can we tolerate his getting a salary out of all proportion to our income? But he is individually not to be blamed for it. He has no need for it. God has made him a wealthy man. I have suggested in my letter that probably the whole of his salary is spent in charity. I have since learnt that my guess is largely likely to be true. Even so, of course, I should resist the giving of such a large salary. I could not vote Rs. 21,000 per month, not perhaps even, Rs. 2,100 per month. But when could

I offer such resistance? Certainly not if I was myself taking from the people an unconscionable toll. I could resist it only if my living bore some correspondence with the average income of the people. We are marching in the name of God. We profess to act on behalf of the hungry, the naked and the unemployed. I have no right to criticise the Viceregal salary if we are costing the country say fifty times seven pice, the average daily income of our people. I have asked the workers to furnish me with an account of the expenses. And the way things are going, I should not be surprised if each of us is costing something near fifty times seven pice. What else can be the result if they will fetch for me from whatever source possible the choicest oranges and grapes, if they will bring 120 when I should want 12 oranges, if when I need one pound of milk, they will produce three? What else can be the result if we would take all the dainties you may place before us under the excuse that we would hurt your feeling if we did not take them. You give us guavas and grapes and we eat them because they are a free gift from a princely farmer. And then imagine me with an easy conscience writing the Viceregal letter on costly glazed paper with a fountain-pen, a free gift from some accommodating friend. Will this behove you and me? Can a letter so written produce the slightest effect?

#### TRUSTEES OF THE DUMB MILLIONS

To live thus would be to illustrate the immortal verse of Akhobhagat who says: "Stolen food is like eating unprocessed mercury." And to live above the means befitting a poor country is to live on stolen food. This battle can never be won by living on stolen food. Nor did I bargain to set out on this march for

living above our means. We expect thousands of volunteers to respond to the call. It will be impossible to keep them on extravagant terms. My life has become so busy that I get little time to come in close touch even with the eighty companions so as to be able to identify them individually. There was therefore no course open to me but to unburden my soul in public. I expect you to understand the central point of my message. If you have not, there is no hope of *Swaraj* through the present effort. We must become real trustees of the dumb millions.

I have exposed our weaknesses to the public gaze. I have not yet given you all the details but I have told you enough to enable you to realise our unworthiness to write the letter to the Viceroy.

Now the local co-workers will understand my agony. Weak, ever exposed to temptations, ever failing, why will you tempt us and pamper us? We may not introduce these incandescent burners in our villages. It is enough that one hundred thousand men prey upon three hundred millions. But how will it be when we begin to prey upon one another? In that event dogs will lick our corpses.

#### ACCOUNT FOR EVERY PICE

These lights are merely a sample of the extravagance I have in mind. My purpose is to wake you up from torpor. Let the volunteers account for every pice spent. I am more capable of offering *Satyagraha* against ourselves than against the Government. I have taken many years before embarking upon civil resistance against the Government. But I should not take as many days for offering it against ourselves. The risk

to be incurred is nothing compared to what has to be incurred in the present *Satyagraha*.

Therefore in your hospitality towards servants like us, I would have you to be miserly rather than lavish. I shall not complain of unavoidable absence of things. In order to procure goat's milk for me, you may not deprive poor women of milk for their children. It would be like poison if you did. Nor may milk and vegetables be brought from Surat. We can do without them if necessary. Do not resort to motor cars on the slightest pretext. The rule is : Do not ride if you can walk. This is not a battle to be conducted with money. It will be impossible to sustain a mass movement with money. Anyway it is beyond me to conduct the campaign with a lavish display of money.

Extravagance has no room in this campaign. If we cannot gather crowds unless we carry on a hurricane expensive propaganda, I would be satisfied to address half a dozen men and women. Success depends not upon our high skill. It depends solely upon God. And He only helps the vigilant and the humble.

#### A HUMILIATING SIGHT

We may not consider anybody as low. I observed that you had provided for the night journey a heavy Kitson burner mounted on a stool which a poor labourer carried on his head. This was a humiliating sight. This man was being goaded to walk fast. I could not bear the sight. I therefore put on speed and outraced the whole company. But it was no use. The man was made to run after me. The humiliation was complete. If the weight had to be carried, I should have loved to see some one among ourselves carrying it. We would then soon dispense both with the stool and the burner.

No labourer would carry such a load on his head. We rightly object to *begar* (forced labour). But what was this if it was not *begar*? Remember that in *Swaraj* we would expect one drawn from the so-called lower class to preside over India's destiny. If then we do not quickly mend our ways, there is no *Swaraj* such as you and I have put before the people.

From my outpouring you may not infer that I shall weaken in my resolve to carry on the struggle. It will continue no matter how co-workers or others act. For me there is no turning back whether I am alone or joined by thousands. I would rather die a dog's death and have my bones licked by dogs than that I should return to the Ashram a broken man.

## STATEMENT AT DANDI

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Mr. Gandhi and his party reached Dandi on the morning of the 5th April 1930. Mrs. Sarojini Naidu had also gone there to see the Mahatma. Interviewed by the Associated Press immediately after his arrival at Dandi, Mr. Gandhi said :

God be thanked for what may be termed the happy ending of the first stage in this, for me at least, the final struggle for freedom. I cannot withhold my compliments from the Government for the policy of complete non-interference adopted by them throughout the march. After the graceless and childish performance in the matter of Mr. Vallabhai's arrest and imprisonment and equally unprovoked arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Sen Gupta, I was wholly unprepared for this exemplary non-interference. I am not so foolish as to imagine that the Government has suddenly lost their proved capacity for provoking popular resentment and then punishing with frightfulness. I wish I could believe this non-interference was due to any real change of heart or policy. The wanton disregard shown by them to popular feeling in the Legislative Assembly and their high-handed action leave no room for doubt that the policy of heartless exploitation of India is to be persisted in at any cost, and so the only interpretation I can put upon this non-interference is that the British Government, powerful though it is, is sensitive to world opinion which will not tolerate repression of extreme political agitation which civil disobedience undoubtedly is, so long as disobedience remains civil and therefore necessarily non-violent.



## APPEAL TO THE COUNTRY

It remains to be seen whether the Government will tolerate, as they have tolerated the march, the actual breach of the salt laws by countless people from to-morrow. I expect extensive popular response to the resolution of the Working Committee. I have seen nothing to warrant the cancellation of the notice I have already issued, that all Committees and Organisations throughout the length and breadth of the land are free, if they are prepared, to commence from to-morrow civil disobedience in respect of the salt laws. God willing, I expect with my companions (volunteers) to commence actual civil disobedience at 6-30 to-morrow morning. 6th April has been to us, since its culmination in Jalianwalla massacre, a day for penance and purification. We therefore commence it with prayer and fasting. I hope the whole of India will observe the National Week commencing from to-morrow in the spirit in which it was conceived. I am positive that the greater the dedication to the country's cause and the greater the purification, the speedier will be the glorious end for which millions of India consciously or unconsciously are striving.

## BREAKING THE SALT LAW

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Gandhiji broke the Salt Law by picking up the salt lying on the sea-shore at Dandi on the morning of the 6th April 1930 amidst loud cries of "Gandhi-ki-jai". This, as we know, was the signal for the breaking of Salt Law at thousands of other places by tens of thousands of people. Immediately after breaking the Salt Law, Mr. Gandhi issued the following Press statement :

Now that the technical or ceremonial breach of the salt law has been committed, it is now open to any one who would take the risk of prosecution under the salt law to manufacture salt wherever he wishes and wherever it is convenient. My advice is that workers should everywhere manufacture salt, and where they know how to prepare clean salt, make use of it and instruct the villagers likewise, telling the villager at the same time that he runs the risk of being prosecuted. In other words the villagers should be fully instructed as to the incidence of the salt tax, and the manner of breaking the laws and regulations connected with it so as to have the salt tax repealed.

It should be made absolutely clear to the villagers that the breach is open and in no way stealthy. This condition being known, they may manufacture salt or help themselves to the salt manufactured by Nature in creeks and pits near the sea-shore, use it for themselves and their cattle, and sell it to those who will buy it, it being well understood that all such people are committing a breach of the salt law and running the risk of a prosecution, or even without a

prosecution are to be subjected by so-called salt officers to harassment.

This war against the salt tax should be continued during the National Week, that is, up to the 13th April. Those who are not engaged in the sacred work should themselves do vigorous propaganda for the boycott of foreign cloth and use of khaddar. They should also endeavour to manufacture as much khaddar as possible. As to this and the prohibition of liquor, I am preparing a message for the women of India who, I am becoming more and more convinced, can make a larger contribution than men towards the attainment of independence, I feel that they will be worthier interpreters of non-violence than men, not because they are weak, as men in their arrogance believe them to be, but because they have greater courage of the right type and immeasurably greater spirit of self-sacrifice.

## WOMEN AND THE MOVEMENT

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One remarkable feature of the situation was that women more than ever participated in it. Groups of women were enlisted as volunteers for organizing the picketing of liquor-shops and foreign cloth-shops in Bombay and Ahmedabad. In the latter city, Mrs. Amhalal Sarabhai, the wife of a leading Mill-owner, organized a deputation to Gandhiji, her programme being the *Swadeshi* vow and organization of the country for the boycott of British goods. Gandhiji himself, addressing a meeting of women in a village near Navsari, requested them not to take part in the violation of the Salt Law. He observed :

Women ought not to take part alongside of men in defence of salt pans. I still give credit to the Government that it will not make war upon our women. It will be wrong on our part to provoke them into so doing. This is men's fight so long as the Government will confine their attention to men. There will be time enough for women to court assaults when the Government has crossed the limit. Let it not be said of us that men sought shelter behind women, well knowing they will be safe if they took women with them in what may be called, for want of a better name, aggressive non-violence. Women have, in the programme I ventured to place before them, enough work and to spare, and all adventure and risk they may be capable of undertaking.

In an open letter to the women of India, Mahatma Gandhi, appealed to them in *Young India* of April 10, 1930, to help the national cause by participating in the prohibition of intoxicating liquors and drugs and boycott of foreign cloth. " Before they have done with the agitation, they might find themselves in prison. It is not improbable that they may be insulted and even injured bodily. To suffer such insult and injury would be their pride. Such suffering, if it comes to them, will hasten the end."

## MESSAGE TO THE NATION

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The following is an English translation of a message dictated by Gandhiji at Dandi on April 9, 1930, when there was a strong rumour of his impending arrest:

If the struggle so auspiciously begun is continued in the same spirit of non-violence to the end, not only shall we see *Purna Swaraj* established in our country before long, but we shall have given to the world an object-lesson worthy of India and her glorious past.

*Swaraj* won without sacrifice cannot last long. I would, therefore, like our people to get ready to make the highest sacrifice that they are capable of. In true sacrifice all the suffering is on one side—one is required to master the art of getting killed without killing, of gaining life by losing it. May India live up to this *mantra* !

At present India's self-respect, in fact her all, is symbolised as it were in a handful of salt in the *Satyagrahi's* hand. Let the fist holding it therefore be broken, but let there be no voluntary surrender of the salt.

Let the Government, if it claims to be a civilised Government, jail those who help themselves to contraband salt. After their arrest the civil resisters will gladly surrender the salt, as they will their bodies, into the custody of their jailors.

But by main force to snatch the salt from the poor, harmless *Satyagrahis'* hands is barbarism pure and simple and an insult to India. Such insult can be answered only by allowing our hand to be fractured

without loosening the grasp. Even then the actual sufferer or his comrades may not harbour in their hearts anger against the wrong-doer. Incivility should be answered not by incivility but by a dignified and calm endurance of all suffering in the name of God.

Let not my companions or the people at large be perturbed over my arrest, for it is not I, but God who is guiding this movement. He ever dwells in the hearts of all and He will vouchsafe to us the right guidance if only we have faith in Him. Our path has already been chalked out for us. Let every village fetch or manufacture contraband salt, sisters should picket liquor-shops, opium dens and foreign cloth dealers' shops. Young and old in every home should ply the *takli* and spin and get woven heaps of yarn every day. Foreign cloth should be burnt. Hindus should eschew untouchability. Hindus, Mussulmans, Sikhs, Parsis, and Christians should all achieve heart unity. Let the majority rest content with what remains after the minorities have been satisfied. Let students leave Government schools and colleges, and Government servants resign their service and devote themselves to the service of the people, and we shall find that *Purna Swaraj* will come knocking at our doors.

## BACK TO YERAWADA

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The response to Mr. Gandhi's call to civil disobedience exceeded even his own expectations. It was instant and well-nigh universal. Thousands began to break the law and court imprisonment. Within a week of Gandhiji's breaking of the Salt Law at Dandi, villages and towns in different provinces began to manifest a sudden revolt, albeit peaceful, against the law. The law-breakers swelled in numbers and swarmed the country and rushed to court prison. Governments in different provinces began to arrest the leading lieutenants of Mr. Gandhi. By the first week of April 1930, many leading Congressmen found themselves locked in and Mr. Jawaharlal Nehru, President of the Congress, was himself arrested and sentenced to six months. Gandhiji's own arrest was only a question of time. For, Government had made up their mind to put a stop to his activities. Accordingly at midnight on the 4th of May 1930, Gandhiji was arrested in his camp at Karadi. Describing the arrest, Mira Bai (Miss Slade) observed: "At dead of night, like thieves, they came to steal him away. For, when they sought to lay hold on him, they feared the multitude, because they took him for a prophet."

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## IRWIN-GANDHI AGREEMENT

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The arrest of Mahatma Gandhi on 4th May 1930 naturally created the greatest sensation not only in India but all over the world. A spontaneous *hartal* was observed throughout the country, in many villages and cities, followed by sympathetic *hartals* in different parts of the world. An influentially signed message was cabled to the Premier, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, by 102 American clergymen of various denominations urging him to seek an amicable settlement with Mr. Gandhi. The Government of India was no doubt keenly alive to the seriousness of the situation. H. E. Lord Irwin interviewed the leading Liberals who met in Council and adopted resolutions urging the need for another announcement from the Viceroy fixing an early date for the R. T. C. The Council of the Liberal Federation, while condemning the civil disobedience movement, urged the Government to speed up the preparations for the R. T. C., to announce the terms of reference and the scope of the discussions. Lord Irwin's announcement reiterated Government's intention not to be "deflected by these unhappy events from our firm determination to abide by the policy he was privileged to announce on November 1". But the Congress Working Committee which met at Allahabad, recommended the continuance of civil disobedience including the various boycotts, the No-tax campaign and the weekly breaches of the Salt Law. The result was the complete breakdown of the normal life of the people, the collapse of business and all round depression. More than one Provincial Government found itself faced with budget deficits. In the meanwhile Congressmen were crowding the prisons in their thousands while the salt raids of Dharsana and Wadala, in which hundreds of volunteers took part and suffered, gave a gruesome setting to the scene. It was at this time that Mr. George Slocumbe, the representative of the London *Daily Herald*, interviewed Mr. Gandhi in prison and in a masterly despatch sketched out the possibility of settlement on certain conditions. On the basis of this document, Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. M. R. Jayskar undertook the very delicate and difficult task of negotiating a settlement of outstanding differences between the Congress and Government. Notes were exchanged between Mr. Gandhi and the Nehrus in prison and the negotiations continued for a fortnight, at the end of which the Viceroy declared that no useful purpose would be served by continuing them. A similar attempt on the part of Mr. Horace Alexander followed.



But peace was not to be. The Round Table Conference, however, opened with impressive splendour in London on the 12th November 1930 and the Plenary Session commenced on the 17th November. The Conference divided itself into a number of Committees, the reports of which were approved at the final session on the 19th January 1931. The Premier in winding up the session declared:

"If in the meantime there is response to the Viceroy's appeal from those engaged at present in civil disobedience and there is a wish to co-operate on the general lines of this declaration, steps will be taken to enlist their services."

In harmony with the Prime Minister's declaration, Lord Irwin issued a statement on January 25, 1931, releasing Mr. Gandhi and the members of the Working Committee unconditionally. Gandhiji thereafter left for Allahabad where Pandit Motilalji was lying ill. The Pandit soon after passed away and Gandhiji after consoling the bereaved members turned to face the situation created by the R. T. C. and the Viceregal statement. It was at this time too that Mr. Gandhi sent a letter to the Viceroy through Moulvi Rafiuddin Ahmed Kidwai, ex-M.L.A., seeking an interview with H. E. at Delhi to discuss the political situation. It would appear that Mr. Gandhi sought the interview with a view to have a peace talk with Lord Irwin the man, rather than H. E. the Viceroy. Now Gandhiji's letter to the Viceroy was a fairly lengthy one. Addressing Lord Irwin as "My dear friend," Gandhiji urged His Excellency to appoint an Enquiry Committee to go into the alleged police excesses. Gandhiji's object in writing to the Viceroy was to find out whether there was really a change of heart on the part of the Government. Lord Irwin having agreed to the interview, Mr. Gandhi left for Delhi on the 16th February. In the meanwhile the Viceroy was in frequent consultation with the Rt. Hon. Sastri, Dr. Sapru and Mr. Jayakar who were, as it were, the intermediaries who arranged for the interview.

The Working Committee had given Mr. Gandhi a clear mandate and invested him with full authority to negotiate in the name of the Congress. His six points which were the absolute minimum for negotiations were: (1) General amnesty; (2) immediate cessation of repression; (3) restitution of all confiscated property; (4) reinstatement of all Government servants punished on political grounds; (5) liberty to manufacture salt and picket liquor and foreign cloth shops; and (6) enquiry into police excesses. Mr. Gandhi motored to the Viceregal House, Delhi, on the afternoon of February 17, 1931 and the talks continued day after day. For well-nigh a fortnight the talks were going on, now in hope, now in fear, but with great patience and goodwill on either side. Liberal leaders were busy smoothening the difficulties while Gandhiji took counsel of the Working Committee which was, as one may say, in continual session close at hand.

At last the conversations ended at 1-30 on the morning of the 5th March 1931 when complete agreement was reached. The agreement was the result of fifteen days' negotiations in which Gandhiji is said to have visited the "Viceroy's House" eight times and spent altogether twenty-four hours, besides undergoing the strain of discussing the terms of the negotiations with the Congress Executive from time to time for longer hours than he spent with the Viceroy. A correspondent rightly pointed out that Gandhiji had, by general agreement, broken all the world's endurance records and that when his own health was none too good.

The Agreement was hailed on all sides as opening a new era in the history of this distracted country..

## THE TERMS OF THE AGREEMENT

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The following is the text of the agreement which was published in the *Gazette of India Extraordinary* of March 5, 1931 :

"Consequent on the conversations that have taken place between His Excellency the Viceroy and Mr. Gandhi, it has been arranged that the civil disobedience movement be discontinued and that, with the approval of His Majesty's Government, certain action be taken by the Government of India and Local Governments.

### THE ROUND TABLE CONFERENCE

(2) As regards constitutional questions, the scope of future discussion is stated, with the assent of His Majesty's Government, to be with the object of considering further the scheme for the Coo-constitutional Government of India discussed at the Round Table Conference. Of the scheme there outlined, Federation is an essential part; so also are Indian responsibility and reservations of safeguards in the interests of India for such matters as, for instance, Defence; External Affairs; the position of Minorities; the financial credit of India, and the discharge of obligations.

(3) In pursuance of the statement made by the Prime Minister in his announcement of the 19th of January 1931, steps will be taken for the participation of the representatives of the Congress in the further discussions that are to take place on the scheme of constitutional reform.

(4) The Settlement relates to activities directly connected with the civil disobedience movement.

### CALLING OFF OF CIVIL DISOBEDIENCE

(5) Civil disobedience will be effectively discontinued and reciprocal action will be taken by the Government. The effective discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement means the effective discontinuance of all activities in furtherance thereof, by whatever methods pursued and in particular the following :

1. The organised defiance of the provisions of any law.
2. The movement for the non-payment of land revenue and other legal dues.
3. The publication of news-sheets in support of the civil disobedience movement.
4. Attempts to influence civil and military servants or village officials against Government or to persuade them to resign their posts.

## BOYCOTT OF BRITISH GOODS

(6) As regards the boycott of foreign goods, there are two issues involved, firstly the character of the boycott and secondly, the methods employed in giving effect to it. The position of Government is as follows: They approve of the encouragement of Indian industries as part of the economic and industrial movement designed to improve the material condition of India, and they have no desire to discourage methods of propaganda, persuasion or advertisement pursued with this object in view which do not interfere with the freedom of action of individuals or are not prejudicial to the maintenance of Law and Order. But the boycott of non-Indian goods (except of cloth which has been applied to all foreign cloth) has been directed during the civil disobedience movement chiefly, if not exclusively, against British goods, and in regard to these it has been admittedly employed in order to exert pressure for political ends.

It is accepted that a boycott of this character, and organised for this purpose, will not be consistent with the participation of representatives of the Congress in a frank and friendly discussion of constitutional questions between representatives of British India, of the Indian States, and of His Majesty's Government and political parties in England, which the settlement is intended to secure. It is therefore agreed that the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement connotes the definite discontinuance of the employment of the boycott of British commodities as a political weapon and that, in consequence, those who have given up during a time of political excitement the sale or purchase of British goods, must be left free without any form of restraint to change their attitude if they so desire.

## PICKETING

(7) In regard to the methods employed in furtherance of the replacement of non-Indian by Indian goods, or against the consumption of intoxicating liquor and drugs, resort will not be had to methods coming within the category of picketing except within the limits permitted by the ordinary law. Such picketing shall be unaggressive and it shall not involve coercion, intimidation, restraint, hostile demonstration, obstruction to the public, or any offence under the ordinary law. If and when any of these methods is employed in any place, the practice of picketing in that place will be suspended.

## CONDUCT OF THE POLICE

(8) Mr. Gandhi has drawn the attention of Government to specific allegations against the conduct of the Police and represented the desirability of a public enquiry into them. In present circumstances Government see great difficulty in this course and feel that it must inevitably lead to charges and counter-charges, and so militate against the re-establishment of peace. Having regard to these considerations, Mr. Gandhi agreed not to press the matter.

## CALLING OFF REPRESSION

(9) The action that Government will take on the discontinuance of the civil disobedience movement is stated in the following paragraphs.

(10) Ordinances promulgated in connection with the civil disobedience movement will be withdrawn.

Ordinance No. 1 of 1931 relating to the terrorist movement does not come within the scope of the provision.

(11) Notifications declaring associations unlawful under the Criminal Law Amendment Act of 1908 will be withdrawn provided that the notifications were made in connection with the civil disobedience movement.

The notifications recently issued by the Burma Government under the Criminal Law Amendment Act do not come within the scope of this provision.

(12) (i) Pending prosecutions will be withdrawn if they have been filed in connection with the civil disobedience movement and relate to offences which do not involve violence other than technical violence or incitement to such violence.

(ii) The same principles will apply to proceedings under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code.

(iii) Where a local Government has moved any High Court or has initiated proceedings under the Legal Practitioners Act in regard to the conduct of legal practitioners in connection with the civil disobedience movement, it will make application to the Court concerned for permission to withdraw such proceedings, provided that the alleged conduct of the persons concerned does not relate to violence, or incitement to violence.

(iv) Prosecutions, if any, against soldiers and police involving disobedience of orders will not come within the scope of this provision.

## RELEASE OF PRISONERS

(13) (i) Those prisoners will be released who are undergoing imprisonment in connection with the civil disobedience movement for offences which did not involve violence other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence.

(ii) If any prisoner who comes within the scope of (i) above has been also sentenced for a jail offence, not involving violence other than technical violence, or incitement to such violence, the latter sentence also will be remitted, or if a prosecution relating to an offence of this character is pending against such a prisoner, it will be withdrawn.

(iii) Soldiers and police convicted of offences involving disobedience of orders—in the very few cases that have occurred—will not come within the scope of the amnesty.

(14) Fines which have not been realised will be remitted. Where an order for the forfeiture of security has been made under the security provisions of the Criminal Procedure Code and the security has not been realised, it will be similarly remitted.

Fines which have been realised and securities forfeited and realised under any law will not be returned.

(15) Additional Police imposed in connection with the civil disobedience movement at the expense of the inhabitants of a particular area will be withdrawn at the discretion of Local Governments. Local Governments will not refund any money not in excess of the actual cost that has been realised but they will remit any sum that has not been realised.

#### RETURN OF MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE PROPERTY

(16) (a) Movable property, which is not an illegal possession, and which has been seized in connection with the civil disobedience movement, under the Ordinances or the provisions of the Criminal Law, will be returned, if it is still in the possession of Government.

(b) Movable property, forfeited or attached in connection with the realisation of land revenue or other dues, will be returned, unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period, special regard will be paid to cases in which the defaulters, while willing to pay, genuinely require time for the purpose, and if necessary, the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.

(c) Compensation will not be given for deterioration.

(d) Where movable property has been sold or otherwise finally disposed of by Government, compensation will not be given and the sale proceeds will not be returned, except in so far as they are in excess of the legal dues for which the property may have been sold.

(e) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the attachment or seizure of property was not in accordance with the law.

(17) (a) Immovable property of which possession has been taken under Ordinance IX of 1930 will be returned in accordance with the provisions of the Ordinance.

(b) Land and other immovable property in the possession of Government, which has been forfeited or attached in connection with the realisation of land revenue or other dues, will be returned, unless the Collector of the District has reason to believe that the defaulter will contumaciously refuse to pay the dues recoverable from him within a reasonable period. In deciding what is a reasonable period special regard will be paid to cases in which the

defaulter, while willing to pay, genuinely requires time for the purpose, and, if necessary, the revenue will be suspended in accordance with the ordinary principles of land revenue administration.

(c) Where immovable property has been sold to third parties, the transaction must be regarded as final so far as Government are concerned.

*Note:*—Mr. Gandhi has represented to Government that according to his information and belief, some at least of these sales have been unlawful and unjust. Government, on the information before them, cannot accept this contention.

(d) It will be open to any person to seek any legal remedy he may have on the ground that the seizure or attachment of property was not in accordance with the law.

(18) Government believe that there have been very few cases in which the realization of dues has not been made in accordance with the provisions of the law. In order to meet such cases, if any, Local Governments will issue instructions to District Officers to have prompt enquiry made into any specific complaint of this nature and to give redress without delay if illegality is established.

#### POSTS OF INCUMBENTS WHO HAVE RESIGNED

(19) Where the posts rendered vacant by resignations have been permanently filled, Government will not be able to reinstate the late incumbents. Other cases of resignation will be considered on their merits by the Local Governments who will pursue a liberal policy in regard to the re-appointment of Government servants and village officials who apply for reinstatement.

#### MANUFACTURE OF SALT

(20) Government are unable to condone breaches of the existing law relating to the salt administration, nor are they able in the present financial conditions of the country to make substantial modifications in the Salt Acts.

For the sake however of giving relief to certain of the poorer classes, they are prepared to extend their administrative provisions on lines already prevailing in certain places in order to permit local residents in villages, immediately adjoining areas where salt can be collected or made, to collect or make salt for domestic consumption or sale within such villages, but not for sale to, or trading with, individuals living outside them.

(21) In the event of the Congress failing to give full effect to the obligations of this settlement, Government will take such action as may, in consequence, become necessary for the protection of the public and individuals and the due observance of Law and Order."

## THE AGREEMENT AND AFTER

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Immediately after the signing of the Agreement, Mr. Gandhi addressed the American and Indian Journalists at Dr. Ansari's residence in Delhi, on 5th March 1931. He said :

In the first place I would like to state that this settlement, such as it is, would have been impossible without the Viceroy's inexhaustible patience and equally inexhaustible industry and unfailing courtesy. I am aware that I must have, though quite unconsciously, given him causes for irritation. I must have also tried his patience, but I cannot recall an occasion when he allowed himself to be betrayed into irritation or impatience. I must add that he was frank throughout these very delicate negotiations, and I believe he was determined, if it was at all possible, to have a settlement. I must confess that I approached the negotiations in fear and trembling. I was also filled with distrust, but at the very outset he disarmed my suspicions and put me at ease. For myself I can say without fear of contradiction that when I wrote my letter inviting the invitation to see him, I was determined not to be outdone in the race for reaching a settlement if it could be reached at all honourably. I am therefore thankful to the Almighty that the settlement was reached and the country has been spared at least for the time being and I hope for all time the sufferings which, in the event of a break-down, would have been intensified a hundredfold.

For a settlement of this character, it is not possible nor wise to say which is the victorious party. If



there is any victory, I should say it belongs to both. The Congress has never made any bid for victory.

In the very nature of things the Congress has a definite goal to reach, and there can be no question of victory without reaching the goal. I would therefore urge all my countrymen and all my sisters, instead of feeling elated if they find in the terms any cause for elation, to humble themselves before God and ask Him to give them strength and wisdom to pursue the course that their mission demands for the time being, whether it is by way of suffering or by way of patient negotiation, consultation and conference.

#### HEROIC PERIOD

I hope therefore that the millions, who have taken part in this struggle of suffering during the past twelve months, will now during the period of conference and construction show the same willingness, the same cohesion, the same effort, and the same wisdom that they have in an eminent degree shown during what I would describe as a heroic period in the modern history of India. . . .

#### REAL OPENING

It would be folly to go on suffering when the opponent makes it easy for you to enter into a discussion with him upon your longings. If a real opening is made, it is one's duty to take advantage of it and, in my humble opinion, the settlement has made a real opening. Such a settlement has necessarily to be provisional as this is. The peace arrived at is conditional upon many other things happening. The largest part of the written word is taken up with what may be called 'Terms of Truce'. This had to be

naturally so. Many things had to happen before the Congress could participate in the deliberations of the Conference. A recital of these was absolutely necessary. But the goal of the Congress is not to get a redress of past wrongs important though they are : its goal is *Purna Swaraj* which, indifferently rendered in English, has been described as complete Independence.

It is India's birthright as it is of any other nation worthy of that name, and India cannot be satisfied with anything less, and throughout the settlement one misses that enchanting word. The clause which carefully hides that word is capable, and intentionally capable, of a double meaning.

#### THE THREE GIRDERS

Federation may be a mirage, or it may mean a vital organic state, in which the two limbs might work so as to strengthen the whole. Responsibility, which is the second girder, may be a mere shadow or it may be a tall, majestic, unbending and unbendable oak. Safeguards in the interests of India may be purely illusory, and so many ropes tying the country hand and foot and strangling her by the neck, or they may be like so many fences protecting a tender plant requiring delicate care and attention.

One may give one meaning and another may give the three girders the other meaning. It is open under that Clause to either party to work along its own lines, and the Congress if it has shown readiness to take part in the deliberation of the Conference, it is because it seeks to make Federation, Responsibility, Safeguards, Reservations, or whatever other names they may be known by, such as would promote the real growth of the country along political, social, economic and moral lines.

If the Congress succeeds in making its position acceptable to the Conference, then I claim that the fruit of that effort will be complete independence. But I know that the way to it is weary. There are many rocks, many pitfalls to be found across the way. But if Congressmen will approach the new task to which they are called, with confidence and courage, I have no misgivings about the result. It is therefore in their hands either to make something noble and worth looking at out of the new opportunity that has come to them, or by lack of self-confidence and want of courage, to fritter away the opportunity.

#### HELP OF OTHERS

But I know that in this task Congressmen will require the aid of the other parties—the aid of the great Princes of India, and last but by no means the least the aid of Englishmen. I need not make any appeal at the present juncture to the different parties. I have little doubt that they are no less eager than Congressmen for the real freedom of their country.

#### FEDERATION IDEAL

But the Princes are a different proposition. Their acceptance of the idea of Federation was certainly for me a surprise, but if they will become equal partners in a Federated India, I venture to suggest that of their own free will they should advance towards the position that what is called British India has been all these long years seeking to occupy.

An undiluted autocracy, however benevolent it may be, and an undiluted democracy, are an incompatible mixture bound to result in an explosion. It is therefore,

I think, necessary for them not to take up an uncompromising attitude and impatiently refuse to listen to an appeal from, or on behalf of, the would-be partner. If they refused any such appeal, they would make the position of the Congress untenable and indeed most awkward. The Congress represents, or endeavours to represent, the whole of the people of India. It recognises no distinction between those who reside in British India or in Indian States. . . .

#### APPEAL TO ENGLISHMEN

I would like to make a similar appeal to the English. If India is to come to her own through conference and consultation, the goodwill and active help of Englishmen are absolutely necessary. I must confess that what seems to have been yielded by them at the Conference in London is not even half enough—no approach to the goal that India has in view. If they will render real help, they must be prepared to let India feel the same glow of freedom which they themselves would die in order to possess. There, English Statesmen would have to dare to let India wander away into the woods through errors. Freedom is not worth having if it does not connote freedom to err and even to sin. If God Almighty has given the humblest of His creatures the freedom to err, it passes my comprehension how human beings, be they ever so experienced and able, can delight in depriving other human beings of that precious right.

Anyway the implication of inviting the Congress to join the Conference is most decidedly that the Congress may not be deterred from any consideration, save that of incapacity, from pressing for the fullest freedom. And the Congress does not consider India to be a sickly child requiring nursing, outside help, and other props.

## APPEAL TO AMERICA

I would like also to register my appeal to the people of the great American Republic and the other nations of the earth. I know that this struggle based as it is on truth and non-violence from which, alas! we the votaries have on occasions undoubtedly strayed, has fired their imagination and excited their curiosity. From curiosity they, and specially America, has progressed to tangible help in the way of sympathy. And I can say on behalf of the Congress and myself that we are all truly grateful for all that sympathy. I hope that in the difficult mission in which the Congress is now about to embark, we shall not only retain their sympathy but that it will grow from day to day. I venture to suggest in all humility that if India reaches her destiny through truth and non-violence, she will have made no small contribution to the world peace for which all the nations of the earth are thirsting, and she would also have in that case made some slight return for the help that those nations have been freely giving to her.

## APPEAL TO POLICE

My last appeal is to the Police and the Civil Service Departments. The Settlement contains a Clause which indicates that I had asked for an inquiry into some of the Police excesses which are alleged to have taken place. The reason for waiving that inquiry is stated in the Settlement itself. The Civil Service is an integral part of the machinery which is kept going by the Police Department. If they really feel that India is soon to become mistress in her own household and they are to serve her loyally and faithfully as her servants, it behoves them even now to make the people feel that when they have to deal with the members of the

Civil Service and the Police Department, they are really dealing with their servants, honoured and wise undoubtedly but nevertheless servants and not masters.

#### RELEASE OF NON-SATYAGRAHIS

I owe a word to hundreds, if not thousands, of my erstwhile fellow-prisoners on whose behalf I have been receiving wires, and who will still be languishing in jails when *Satyagrahi* prisoners who were jailed during the past 12 months will have been discharged. Personally I do not believe in imprisoning by way of punishment even those who commit violence. I know that those who have done violence through political motives are entitled to claim, if not the same wisdom, certainly the same spirit of love and self-sacrifice that I would claim for myself. And, therefore, if I could have justly secured their liberty in preference to my own or that of fellow-*Satyagrahis* I should truthfully have secured it.

But, I trust, they will realize that I could not in justice ask for their discharge. But that does not mean that I or the members of the Working Committee have not them in mind.

The Congress has embarked deliberately, though provisionally, on a career of co-operation. If Congressmen honourably and fully implement the conditions applicable to them of the Settlement, the Congress will obtain an irresistible prestige and would have inspired Government with confidence in its ability to ensure peace, as I think, it has proved its ability to conduct disobedience.

And if the people in general will clothe the Congress with that power and prestige, I promise that it will not be long before every one of these political prisoners is

discharged including the detenues, the Meerut prisoners, and all the rest.

#### VIOLENT ORGANISATION

There is no doubt a small but active organization in India which would secure India's liberty through violent action. I appeal to that organisation, as I have done before, to desist from its activities, if not yet out of conviction, then out of expedience. They have perhaps somewhat realized what great power non-violence has. They will not deny that the almost miraculous mass awakening was possible only because of the mysterious and yet unfailing effect of non-violence. I want them to be patient and give the Congress, or if they will, me, a chance to work out the plan of truth and non-violence. After all it is hardly yet a full year since the Dandi march. One year in the life of an experiment affecting 300 millions of human beings is but a second in the cycle of time. Let them wait yet awhile. Let them preserve their precious lives for the service of the Motherland to which all will be presently called, and let them give to the Congress an opportunity of securing the release of all the other political prisoners and may be even rescuing from the gallows those who are condemned to them as being guilty of murder. . . .

One personal note and I have done. I believe that I put my whole soul into the effort to secure an honourable settlement. I have pledged my word to Lord Irwin that in making good the terms of the settlement in so far as they bind the Congress, I should devote myself heart and soul to the task. I worked for the settlement not in order to break it to pieces at the first opportunity, but in order to strain every nerve to make absolutely final what to-day is provisional and to make it a precursor of the goal to attain which the Congress exists.







THE MAHATMA AT THE WHEEL



Mahatma Gandhi accompanied by Mira Bai (Miss Slade)  
visiting Dr. Howlett Johnson, Dean of Canterbury

## R. T. C. SPEECHES

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Ever since the Irwin-Gandhi Agreement, Gandhiji devoted himself solely to the task of seeing that the country fulfilled the terms both in letter and in spirit, and in all his speeches and statements he impressed upon the people the duty of implementing the Pact in every possible way. Indeed, Lord Irwin himself bore testimony to Mr. Gandhi's part in the transaction in these words : "Throughout my conversations with Mr. Gandhi, I felt complete assurance that I could implicitly trust his word and I am confident that he will do everything in his power to give effect to those undertakings which are recorded in the published statement."

Gandhiji visited the Gujarat villages which had suffered so terribly during the No-tax campaign and entered Ahmedabad on the 10th March 1931 for the first time after he left it before the famous march to Dandi. Here he was presented with a gold takli and a purse of Rs. 70,000. He then took part in the Karachi Congress which met on the 28th March 1931 under the presidency of Mr. Vallabhai Patel, and with considerable difficulty pacified the bulk of the Congressmen who would not reconcile themselves to the execution of Bhagat Singh and succeeded in persuading the Congress to ratify the Settlement. Lord Willingdon, in the meanwhile, succeeded Lord Irwin as Viceroy on April 17, 1931, and Gandhiji sought an interview with him at Simla on May 13. Towards the end of the month he announced that he would fully participate in the R. T. C. discussions if he went to London. The implications of that "if" were made apparent in the release of correspondence between Mr. Gandhi and the Governor of Bombay on the one hand and that between him and the Government of India over the non-fulfilment of truce terms. Thus for weeks charges and counter-charges of non-observance of terms were made by each side till in the last week of August, Mr. Gandhi interviewed Mr. Emerson, the Home Secretary, and the Viceroy. As a result of the Gandhi-Willingdon talks, the following *communiqué* was published on the 27th August 1931 :

The Congress will now be represented by Mr. Gandhi at the Round Table Conference.

The Settlement of March 5, 1931, remains operative. The Government of India and the local Governments will secure the observance of the specific provisions of the Settlement in those cases, if any, in which a breach is established and will give their careful consideration to any

representation that may be made in this respect. The Congress will fulfil their obligations under the Settlement.

In regard to collections of land revenue in the Surat district, the point in issue is whether in those villages of Bardoli Taluk and Valod Mahal which were visited by revenue officials accompanied by a party of Police during the month of July 1931, more severe demands, having regard to their material circumstances, were made from revenue-payers and enforced by coercion exercised through the Police than were made from and met by revenue-payers of other villages of the Bardoli Taluka. The Government of India, in consultation and full agreement with the Government of Bombay, have decided that an inquiry shall be held into this issue in accordance with the following terms of reference: To inquire into the allegations that Khatedars in the villages in question were compelled by means of coercion exercised through the Police to pay revenue in excess of what would have been demanded if the standard had been applied which was adopted in other villages of the Bardoli Taluka where collections were effected after March 5, 1931, without the assistance of the Police and to ascertain what sum, if any, was so paid.

The Government of Bombay appointed Mr. R. G. Gordon, I.C.S., Collector of Nasik, to hold the inquiry. Thus the Viceroy having complied with the principal requests of Mr. Gandhi, the Mahatma accompanied by Pandit Malaviya and Sir Prabhashankar Pattani sailed for London by *S. S. Rajaputana* on August 29, 1931. Gandhiji, according to his own wish and the decision of the Congress, was its sole representative, and he was attended by Devi Das his youngest son, Mr. Pyarelal, his political secretary, and Mira Bai. Universal good wishes followed him across the seas and he was the recipient of a number of presents and addresses from Indians, Arabs, Egyptians and other admirers at all the ports where the ship halted. Gandhiji reached London on September 12, 1931, and was accorded a public reception organised by a number of persons distinguished in art, literature and philosophy under the chairmanship of the poet, Mr. Lawrence Housman. During his stay in England, Gandhiji chose Kingsley Hall in the East End of London as his home where his hostess Miss Muriel Lester, who had known Mr. Gandhi's life at Sabarmati Ashram, had arranged to entertain him and his friends.

In the following pages we give the full text of Gandhiji's speeches at the various Committees and at the full Sessions of the Round Table Conference.

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## THE NATIONAL DEMAND

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Speaking at the Federal Structure Sub-Committee of the Round Table Conference on September 15, 1931, Mr. Gandhi said:

I must confess at the outset that I am not a little embarrassed in having to state before you the position of the Indian National Congress. I would like to say that I have come to London to attend this Sub-Committee as also the Round Table Conference, when the proper time comes, absolutely in the spirit of co-operation and to strive to my utmost to find points of agreement. I would like also to give this assurance to His Majesty's Government that at no stage is it, or will it be, my desire to embarrass authority; and I would like to give the same assurance to my colleagues here, that however much we may differ about our view-points, I shall not obstruct them in any shape or form. Therefore my position here depends entirely upon your goodwill as also the goodwill of His Majesty's Government. If at any time I found that I could not be of any useful service to the Conference, I would not hesitate to withdraw myself from it. I can also say to those who are responsible for the management of this Committee and the Conference that they have only to give a sign and I should have no hesitation in withdrawing.

I am obliged to make these remarks because I know that there are fundamental differences of opinion between the Government and the Congress, and it is

possible that there are vital differences between my colleagues and myself. There is also a limitation under which I shall be working. I am but a poor humble agent acting on behalf of the Indian National Congress; and it might be as well to remind ourselves of what the Congress stands for and what it is. You will then extend your sympathy to me, because I know that the burden that rests upon my shoulders is really very great.

#### WHAT THE CONGRESS IS

The Congress is, if I am not mistaken, the oldest political organisation we have in India. It has had nearly 50 years of life during which period it has, without any interruption, held its annual session. It is what it means—national. It represents no particular community, no particular class, no particular interest. It claims to represent all Indian interests and all classes. It is a matter of the greatest pleasure to me to state that it was first conceived in an English brain. Allan Octavius Hume we knew as the father of the Congress. It was nursed by two great Parsis: Sir Pherozeshah Mehta and Dadabhai Naoroji, whom all India delighted to recognise as its Grand Old Man. From the very commencement the Congress had Mussulmans, Christians, Anglo-Indians, I might say all religions, sects, and communities represented upon it more or less fully. The late Badruddin Tyabji identified himself with the Congress. We have had Mussulmans and Parsis as presidents of the Congress. I can recall at least one Indian Christian president at the present moment: W. C. Bonnerji. Kalicharan Bannerji than whom I have not had the privilege of knowing a purer Indian was also thoroughly identified with the Congress. I miss, as I have no

doubt all of you miss, the presence in our midst of Mr. K. T. Paul. Although he never officially belonged to the Congress, he was a nationalist to the full and a sympathiser of the Congress.

As you know, the late Maulana Muhammed Ali, whose presence also we miss to-day, was a president of the Congress, and at present we have four Mussulmans as members of the Working Committee which consists of 15 members. We have had women as our presidents: Dr. Annie Besant was the first, and Mrs. Sarojini Naidu followed. We have her as a member of the Working Committee also; and so, if we have no distinctions of class or creed, we have no distinctions of sex either.

The Congress has, from its very commencement, taken up the cause of the so-called untouchables. There was a time when the Congress had at every annual session as its adjunct the Social Conference, to which the late Ranade had dedicated his energies among his many activities. Headed by him, you will find in the programme of the Social Conference reform in connection with the untouchables taking a prominent place. But in 1920 the Congress took a large step and brought the question of removal of untouchability as a plank on the political platform, made it an important item of the political programme. Just as the Congress considered Hindu-Muslim unity, thereby meaning unity amongst the people following all the great religions to be indispensable for the attainment of *Swaraj*, so also did the Congress consider the removal of untouchability as an indispensable condition for the attainment of full freedom.

The position the Congress took up in 1920 remains intact to-day, and so you will see that the

Congress has attempted from its very beginning to be what it has described itself to be, namely, national in every sense of the term.

If Your Highnesses will permit me to say it in the very early stages, the Congress took up your cause also. Let me remind this Committee that it was the Grand Old Man of India who sponsored the cause of Kashmir and Mysore, and these two great Houses, I venture in all humility to submit, owe not a little to the efforts of Dadabhai Naoroji and the Congress. Even now the Congress has endeavoured to serve the Princes of India by refraining from any interference in their domestic and internal affairs.

I hope that this brief introduction that I thought fit to give, will serve to enable the Sub-Committee and those who are interested in the claims of the Congress to understand that it has endeavoured to deserve the claim that it has made. It has failed, I know, often to live up to the claim, but I venture to submit that if you were to examine the history of the Congress, you would find that it has more often succeeded and progressively succeeded than failed. Above all, the Congress represents in its essence the dumb semi-starved millions scattered over the length and breadth of the land in its seven hundred thousand villages, no matter whether they come from what is called British India or what is called Indian India. Every interest which, in the opinion of the Congress, is worthy of protection, has to subserve the interests of these dumb millions. You do find now and again an apparent clash between several interests. If there is a genuine and real clash, I have no hesitation in saying on behalf of the Congress that the Congress will sacrifice every

interest for the sake of the interests of these dumb millions. It is therefore essentially a peasant organisation or it is becoming so progressively. You and even the Indian members of the Sub-Committee will perhaps be astonished to find that to-day the Congress through its organisation, the All-India Spinners' Association, is finding work for nearly 50,000 women in nearly 2,000 villages and these women are possibly 50 per cent. Mussulman women. Thousands of them belong to the so-called untouchable classes. We have thus in this constructive manner penetrated these villages and the effort is being made to cover every one of the 700,000 villages. It is a superhuman task but if human effort can do so, you will presently find Congress covering all of these villages and bringing to them the message of the spinning wheel.

#### THE CONGRESS DEMAND

This being the representative character of the Congress, you will not be astonished when I read to you the Congress mandate. I hope that it may not jar upon you. You may consider that the Congress is making a claim which is wholly untenable. Such as it is, I am here to put forth that claim on behalf of the Congress in the gentlest manner possible but also in the firmest manner possible. I have come here to prosecute that claim with all the faith and energy that I can command. If you can convince me to the contrary and show that the claim is inimical to the interests of these dumb millions, I shall revise my opinion. I am open to conviction, but even so I should have to ask my principals to consent to that revision before I could usefully act as the agent of the Congress. At this stage I propose to read to you this mandate so that you can understand clearly the limitations imposed upon me.



This was a resolution passed at the Karachi Session of the Indian National Congress :

This Congress, having considered the provisional settlement between the Working Committee and the Government of India, endorses it and desires to make it clear that the Congress goal of *Purna Swaraj*, meaning complete independence, remains intact. In the event of a way remaining otherwise open to the Congress to be represented at any conference with the representatives of the British Government, the Congress delegation will work for this goal and in particular so as to give the nation control over the army, external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy and to have a scrutiny by an impartial tribunal of the financial transactions of the British Government in India, to examine and assess the obligations to be undertaken by India or England and the right for either party to end the partnership at will provided, however, that the Congress delegation will be free to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of India.

Then follows the appointment. I have in the light of this mandate endeavoured to study as carefully as I was capable of studying the provisional conclusions arrived at by the several Sub-Committees appointed by the Round Table Conference. I have also carefully studied the Prime Minister's statement giving the considered policy of His Majesty's Government. I speak subject to correction, but so far as I have been able to understand this document falls short of what is aimed at and claimed by the Congress. True, I have the liberty to accept such adjustments as may be demonstrably in the interests of India, but they have all to be consistent with the fundamentals stated in this mandate.

I remind myself at this stage of the terms of what is to me a sacred settlement—the settlement arrived at Delhi between the Government of India and the Congress. In that settlement the Congress has accepted the principle of federation; the principle that there should be responsibility at the centre, and has accepted also the principle

that there should be safeguards in so far as they may be necessary in the interests of India.

#### EQUAL PARTNERSHIP

There was one phrase used yesterday, I forget by which delegate, but it struck me very forcibly. He said: "We do not want a merely political constitution." I do not know that he gave that expression the same meaning that it immediately bore to me; but I immediately said to myself, this phrase has given me a good expression. It is true the Congress will not be, and personally speaking, I myself would never be, satisfied with a mere political constitution which, to read, would seem to give India all she can possibly politically desire but in reality would give her nothing. If we are intent upon complete independence it is not from any sense of arrogance, it is not because we want to parade before the Universe that we have now severed all connection with the British people. Nothing of the kind. On the contrary you find in this mandate itself that the Congress contemplates a partnership; the Congress contemplates a connection with the British people, but that connection should be such as can exist between two absolute-equals. Time was when I prided myself on being, and being called, a British subject. I have ceased for many years to call myself a British subject: I would far rather be called a rebel than a subject; but I have now aspired, I still aspire, to be a citizen not in the Empire but in a Commonwealth, in a partnership if possible; if God wills it, an indissoluble partnership but not a partnership superimposed upon one nation by another. Hence you find here that the Congress claims that either party should have the right to sever this connection, to dissolve the partnership. It has got to be necessarily therefore of mutual benefit. May I say—it may be irrelevant to the

consideration but not irrelevant to me—that as I have said elsewhere, I can quite understand responsible British statesmen to-day being wholly engrossed in domestic affairs in trying to make both ends meet. We could not expect them to do anything less, and I felt, even as I was sailing towards London, whether we, in the Sub-Committee at the present moment, would not be a drag upon the British Ministers whether we would not be interlopers. And yet, I said to myself, it is possible that we might not be interlopers, it is possible that the British Ministers themselves might consider the proceedings of the Round Table Conference to be of primary importance even in terms of their domestic affairs. Yes, India can be held by the sword. But what will conduce to the prosperity of Great Britain and the economic freedom of Great Britain: an enslaved but a rebellious India, or an India, an esteemed partner with Britain to share her sorrows, to take part side by side with Britain in her misfortunes?

#### MY DREAM

Yes, if need be, but at her own will, to fight side by side with Britain, not for the exploitation of a single race or a single human being on earth, but it may be conceivably for the good of the whole world. If I want freedom for my country, believe me, if I can possibly help it, I do not want that freedom in order that I, belonging to a nation which counts one-fifth of the human race, may exploit any other race upon earth, or any single individual. If I want that freedom for my country, I would not be deserving of that freedom if I did not cherish and treasure the equal right of every other race—weak or strong—to the same freedom. And so I said to myself, whilst I was nearing the shores of your beautiful Island that, perchance it might be possible for me to convince the British Ministers that

India as a valuable partner, not held by force but by the silken cord of love, an India of that character might be conceivably of real assistance to you in balancing your budget, not for one year but for many years. What cannot the two nations do—one a handful but brave, with a record for bravery perhaps unsurpassed, a nation noted for having fought slavery, a nation that has at least claimed times without number to protect the weak—and another a very ancient nation, counted in millions, with a glorious and ancient past, representing at the present moment two great cultures—the Islam and Hindu cultures—and if you will, also containing not a small but a very large Christian population, and certainly absorbing the whole of the splendid Zoroastrian stock, in numbers almost beneath contempt, but in philanthropy and enterprise almost unequalled, certainly unsurpassed. We have got all these cultures concentrated in India, and supposing that God fires both Hindus and Mussulmans represented here with a proper spirit so that they close ranks and come to an honourable understanding, take that nation and this nation together, I again ask myself and ask you whether with an India free, completely independent as Great Britain is, an honourable partnership between these two nations cannot be mutually beneficial; even in terms of the domestic affair of this great nation. And so, in that dreamy hope I have approached the British Isles, and I shall still cherish that dream.

And when I have said this perhaps I have said all, and you will be able to dot the I's and cross the T's, not expecting me to fill in all the details and tell you what I mean by control over the army, what I mean by control over external affairs, finance, fiscal and economic policy, or even the financial transactions which a friend yesterday

considered to be sacrosanct. I do not take that view. If there is a stock-taking between incoming and outgoing partners, their transactions are subject to audit and adjustment, and the Congress will not be guilty of any dishonourable conduct or crime in saying that the nation should understand what it is taking over and what it should not take over. This audit, this scrutiny, is asked for not merely in the interests of India; it is asked for in the interests of both. I am positive that the British people do not want to saddle upon India a single burden which it should not legitimately bear, and I am here to declare on behalf of the Congress that the Congress will never think of repudiating a single claim or a burden that it should justly discharge. If we are to live as an honourable nation worthy of commanding credit from the whole world, we will pay every farthing of legitimate debt with our blood.

I do not think I should take you any further through the clauses of this mandate and analyse for you the meaning of these clauses as Congressmen give them. If it is God's will that I should continue to take part in these deliberations, as the deliberations proceed, I shall be able to explain the implications of these clauses. As the deliberations proceed, I would have my say in connection with the safeguards also. But, I think, I have said quite enough in having, with some elaboration and with your generous indulgence, Lord Chancellor, taken the time of this meeting. I had not intended really to take that time, but I felt that I could not possibly do justice to the cause I have come to expound to you, the Sub-Committee, and to the British Nation of which we the Indian delegation are at present the guests if I did not give you out of the whole of my heart my cherished wish even at this time. I would love to go away from the shores of the British Isles

with the conviction that there was to be an honourable and equal partnership between Great Britain and India.

I cannot do anything more than say that it will be my fervent prayer during all the days that I live in your midst that this consummation may be reached. I thank you, Lord Chancellor, for the courtesy that you have extended to me in not stopping me although I have taken close-upon forty-five minutes. I was not entitled to all that indulgence and I thank you once more.

## THE LEGISLATURES

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The following is the full text of Mr. Gandhi's speech at the Federal Structure Committee on the second day of his participation, viz., the 17th September 1931 :

Lord Chancellor, it is not without very great hesitation that I take part in this debate and before I proceed to deal with the several points that are noted down here for discussion, I should like with your permission to disburden myself of an oppressive feeling that has been growing on me ever since Monday. I have watched with the greatest attention the discussions that have taken place in this Committee. I have endeavoured to study, as I have not done before, the list of the delegates, and the first feeling of oppression that has been coming upon me is, that we are not the chosen ones of the nation which we should be representing but we are the chosen ones of the Government. I see, as I study the list, and as I know the different parties and groups in India from experience, some very noticeable gaps also ; and so I am oppressed with a sense of unreality in connection with our composition.

My second reason for feeling a sense of unreality is, that these proceedings seem to me to be interminable and to be leading us practically nowhere. If we go on at this rate, I do not know that we shall proceed beyond having discussed the various points raised before this Sub-Committee threadbare.

I would therefore first of all, Lord Chancellor, tender my deepest sympathies to you for the very great patience, and may I add the unfailing courtesy with which you are handling us, and I really congratulate you upon the great

pains that you are taking over the proceedings of this Sub-Committee. I hope however that at the end of your task and of our task, it will be possible for me to tender my congratulations on having enabled us, or even compelled us, to show some tangible result.

#### A COMPLAINT

May I here lodge a gentle, humble complaint against His Majesty's advisers. Having brought us together from over the seas and knowing, as I take it they do know, that we are all of us, without exception, busy people, as they themselves are, and that we have left our respective posts of duties, having brought us together is it not possible for them to give us a lead? Can I not, through you, appeal to them to let us know their mind? I should be delighted and I feel that would be the proper procedure too if I may venture to say so in your presence if they would bring forward concrete proposals for taking our opinion. If some such thing was done, I have no doubt that we should be able to come to some conclusions, good or bad, satisfactory or unsatisfactory; but if we simply resolve ourselves into a debating society, each member of which gives an eloquent discourse upon the points severally raised, I do not think that we shall be serving or advancing the purpose for which we have been brought together.

It seems to me that it might be profitable if it is open for you to appoint a Sub-Committee to give you some points for conclusion so that our proceedings may be terminated in fair time. I have simply ventured to throw out these suggestions for your consideration and for the consideration of the members. Perhaps you will kindly bring them to the notice of His Majesty's advisers for their consideration.

I do want them to guide us and to give us a lead and to place their own cards on the table. I want them to say



what they would do supposing that we appointed them as the arbiters of our destiny. If they would be good enough to seek our advice and opinion, then we should give them our advice and opinion. That would be in my opinion really a better thing than this state of hopeless uncertainty and endless delay.

Having said that, I shall venture to offer a few remarks upon Head 2. There I share the difficulty that faced Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. If I understood him rightly, he said that he was embarrassed in that he was called upon to deal with several sub-heads when he did not know what the franchise actually would be. There is this difficulty that I share with him, but there is an additional difficulty that stares me in the face. I placed before the Committee the mandate of the Congress and I have to discuss every one of the sub-heads in terms of that mandate. Therefore on some of these sub-heads I would have to offer suggestions or my opinion in terms of that mandate, and if the Committee does not know what it is sailing for, naturally the opinion that I may offer would be really of no value to the Committee. The opinion would be of value only in terms of that mandate. My meaning will be clear when I come to examine those sub-heads.

#### THE STATES

With reference to sub-head (i) whilst my sympathies broadly speaking are with Dr. Ambedkar, my reason is wholly with Mr. Gavin Jones and Sir Sultan Ahmed. If we were a homogeneous Sub-Committee whose members were entitled to vote and come to a conclusion, I should then sail a very long distance with Dr. Ambedkar, but such is not our position. We are an ill-assorted group, each member of which is perfectly independent and is entitled to give his or her views. In that state we have

no right, in my humble opinion, to say to the States what they shall do and what they shall not do. Those States have very generously come to our assistance and said that they would federate with us and perhaps part with some of their rights which they might otherwise have held exclusively. In that condition I could not but endorse the opinion given by Sir Sultan Ahmed which was perhaps emphasized by Mr. Gavin Jones, that the utmost that we can do is to plead with the States and show them our own difficulties; but at the same time I feel that we have to recognise their special difficulties also.

Therefore I can only venture a suggestion or two to the great Princes for their sympathetic consideration and I would urge this, being a man of the people, from the people, and endeavouring to represent the lowest classes of society, I would urge upon them the advisability of finding a place for themselves also in any scheme that they may evolve and present for the acceptance of this Sub-Committee. I feel, and I know, that they have the interests of their subjects at heart. I know that they claim jealously to guard their interests, but they will, if all goes well, more and more come in contact with popular India if I may so call British India, and they will want to make common cause with the inhabitants of that India, as the people of that India would want to make common cause with the India of the Princes. After all there is no vital, real division between these two Indias. If one can divide a living body into two parts, you may divide India into two parts. It has lived as one country from time immemorial, and no artificial boundary can possibly divide it. The Princes, be it said to their credit, when they declared themselves frankly and courageously in favour of Federation, claimed also to be of the same blood

with us, our own kith and kin. How could they do otherwise? There is no difference between them and us, except that we are common people and they are, God has made them, noblemen, princes. I wish them well; I wish them all prosperity; and I also pray that their prosperity and their welfare may be utilised for the advancement of their own dear people, their own subjects.

Beyond this I will not go, I cannot go, I can only make an appeal to them. It is open to them, as we know, either to come into the Federation or not to come into it. It is up to us to make it easy for them to come into the Federation. It is up to them to make it easy for us to welcome them with open arms.

Without that spirit of give-and-take I know that we shall not be able to come to any definite scheme of Federation; or, if we do, we shall ultimately quarrel and break up. Therefore I would rather that we did not embark upon any federal scheme than that we should do so without our full hearts in the thing. If we do so, we should do so whole-heartedly.

#### VOTERS' QUALIFICATION

Then, with reference to the second head on the question, whether there should be any disqualification or not. Although I claim to be a full-fledged democrat, I have no hesitation in saying that it is entirely consistent with the rights of the voter to have some disqualifications attaching to candidature as also some disqualifications which would unseat a member. What they should be I do not wish to go into at the present moment; I simply say that I would endorse whole-heartedly the idea and the principle of disqualification.

The words 'moral turpitude' do not frighten me. On the contrary I think they are good words. Of course any

words that we may choose with the greatest deliberation will still cause difficulty, but what are judges if they are not there to surmount those difficulties? In case of difficulty, judges will come to our assistance and will say what comes under the term 'moral turpitude' and what does not; and if perchance a person like myself offering civil resistance was considered guilty of 'moral turpitude', I will take that. I do not mind being disqualified. Some other people might have to suffer hardship also, but on that account I am not disposed to say that there shall be no disqualifications whatsoever, and that, if there were any, it would be an encroachment upon the right of the voter. If we are to have some test or some age limit, I think we should have some character limit as well.

#### INDIRECT ELECTIONS

Then the third point is as to indirect and direct election. I wish Lord Peel were here to find me in substantial agreement with him so far as the principle of indirect election is concerned. I do not know, I am talking simply as a layman, but the words, 'indirect election' do not frighten me. I do not know if they have any technical meaning; if they have, I am wholly unaware of it. I shall say what I myself mean. If that is also called 'indirect election', I would certainly go round and plead for it and probably get a large body of public opinion in favour of that method of election. I am wedded to adult suffrage. Somehow or other, Congressmen swear by it. Adult suffrage is necessary for more reasons than one, and one of the decisive reasons to me is that it enables me to satisfy all the reasonable aspirations, not only of the Mussulmans but also of the so-called untouchables, of Christians, of labourers and all kinds of classes.

I cannot possibly bear the idea that a man who has got wealth should have the vote, but that a man who has got character but no wealth or literacy should have no vote; or that a man who works honestly by the sweat of his brow day in and day out should not have the vote for the crime of being a poor man. It is an unbearable thing, and having lived and mixed with the poorest of the villagers and having prided myself on being considered an untouchable, I know that some of the finest specimens of humanity are to be found amongst these poor people, amongst the very untouchables themselves. I would far rather forego the right of voting myself than that this untouchable brother should not have the vote.

#### LITERACY

I am not enamoured of the doctrine of literacy that a voter must at least have a knowledge of the three R's. I want for my people a knowledge of the three R's, but I know also that if I have to wait until they have got a knowledge of the three R's before they can be qualified for voting I shall have to wait until the Greek Kalends, and I am not prepared to wait all that time. I know millions of these men are quite capable of voting, but if we are going to give them the vote, it will become very difficult, if not absolutely impossible, to bring them all on the voters' list and have manageable constituencies.

I do share Lord Peel's fear that if we have unwieldy constituencies, it is not possible for the candidate to come in personal touch with all this multitude of people, or to keep touch with them from time to time and to take their opinion and so on. Although I have never aspired to legislative honours, I have had something to do with these electorates and I know how difficult

it has been. I also know the experiences of those who have been members of these legislative bodies.

We, in the Congress, therefore have evolved a scheme and though the Government of the day have accused us of insolently setting up a parallel Government, I would like to subscribe to that charge in my own fashion. Though we have not set up any parallel Government, we certainly aspire some day or other to displace the existing Government, and in due course in the course of evolution to take charge also of that Government.

Having been for the last fourteen years a draftsman of the Indian National Congress and having been for nearly twenty years draftsman for a similar body in South Africa, you will allow me to share my experience with you. In the Congress Constitution we have practically adult suffrage. We impose a national fee of 4 annas a year. I would not mind imposing that fee even here. I again share Lord Peel's fear that in our poor country we run the risk of having to spend a lot of money merely upon managing our elections. I would avoid that and therefore I would even collect this money. I am open to conviction that even 4 annas would be a grave burden in which case I would waive it; but in any case in the Congress organisation we have that.

We have also another distinguishing feature. So far as I know the working of voting systems, the registration officer has to put on the voters' list all those who, he considers, are entitled to the vote and hence, whether a man wishes to vote or not, whether he wants his name to come on the list or not, he finds his name there. On one fine morning I found my name on the voters' list in Durban in Natal. I had no

intention of affecting the legislative position there and I never cared to place my name on the roll of voters, but when some candidate wanted my vote for himself, he drew my attention to the fact that I was on the voters' list, and since then I have known that that is how voters' lists are prepared.

We have this alternative, that he who wants to vote can have the vote. It is therefore open to those who want to vote to do so, and subject to the condition regarding age and any other condition which may be applicable to all, it will be open to many millions to have their names without distinction of sex on the voters' list. I think a scheme of that character would keep the voters' list in a manageable compass.

#### ELECTORAL ORGANISATION

Even so we would have millions, and something is needed to link the village with the Central Legislature. We have something analogous to the Central Legislature in the Indian Congress Committee. We have also provincial bodies analogous to the provincial legislatures and we have also our own tin-pot legislation and we have also our administration. We have got our own Executive. It is perfectly true we have no bayonets to back it, but we have something infinitely superior to back our decisions and to get our people to conform to these decisions, and we have hitherto not found insurmountable difficulties. I do not say that we have been able always to exact obedience fully in all circumstances, but we have been able to scrape through all these 47 years and year after year this Congress has grown from height to height.

Let me tell you that our provincial councils have got full authority to frame bye-laws in order to govern

their elections. The corner-stone, namely, the qualifications for voters, they cannot change at all but all other things they can have in their own way.

Therefore I will take only one province where this thing is done. The villages elect their own little committees. These committees elect the taluka committees (taluka is a sub-district) and those taluka committees again elect the district council and the district councils elect provincial councils. The provincial councils send their members to the Central Legislature if I may so dub this All-India Congress Committee. That is how we have been able to do it. Whether in this scheme we may do this or may do something else I do not mind, but I have certainly visualised that we have 700,000 villages. I believe that the 700,000 includes the villages in Princes' India also. Then we have 500,000 or a little more in popular India. We would have these 500,000 units each to elect its own representative and these representatives will be the electorate that would elect, if you will, representatives to the Central or the Federal Legislature. I have simply given you an outline of the scheme. It can be filled in if it commends itself to your attention. If we are going to have adult suffrage, I am afraid that we shall have to fall back upon a scheme somewhat after the style that I have suggested to you. Wherever it has been working, I can only give you my evidence that it has worked with excellent results and there has been no difficulty in establishing contact through these respective representatives with the humblest villager. The machinery has worked smoothly and where people have worked it honestly, it has worked expeditiously and certainly without any expense worth naming. Under this scheme



I cannot conceive the possibility of a candidate having to spend Rs. 60,000 over an election, or even one lakh. I know of some cases in which the expenses have run to one lakh of rupees; in my opinion an atrocious figure for the poorest country in the world.

#### BICAMERAL LEGISLATURE

Whilst I am upon this, I would like to give you my opinion for what it may be worth in connection with bicameral legislatures. I find myself, if it would not offend your susceptibilities, in Mr. Joshi's company. I am certainly not enamoured or I do not swear by two legislatures. I have no fear of a popular legislature running away with itself and hastily passing some laws of which afterwards it will have to repent. I would not like to give a bad name to it and then hang the popular legislature. I think that a popular legislature can take care of itself and since we are dealing with the poorest country in the world, the less expenses we have to bear the better it is for us. I do not for one moment endorse the idea that unless we have an Upper Chamber to exercise some control over the popular chamber, the popular chamber will ruin the country. I have no such fear but I can visualise a state of affairs when there can be a battle royal between the popular chamber and the Upper Chamber. Anyway, whilst I would not take up a decisive attitude in connection with it, personally I am firmly of opinion that we can do with one Chamber only and that we can do with it to great advantage. We will certainly save a great deal of expense if we can bring ourselves to believe that we shall do with one Chamber. I find myself in agreement whole-heartedly with Lord Peel that we need not worry ourselves about precedents. We shall set a new precedent ourselves. After all we are a Continent. There is no such thing as

absolute similarity between any two human living institutions. We have our own peculiar circumstances and we have our idiosyncrasies. I do feel that we shall have in many ways to strike out a new path for ourselves irrespective of precedents. Therefore I feel that we would not go wrong if we tried the method of having one Chamber only. Make it as perfect as human ingenuity can by all means, but be satisfied with only one Chamber. Holding these views, I do not need to say anything about sub-heads (iii) and (iv).

#### SPECIAL INTERESTS

I come to sub-head (v), representation by special constituencies of special interests. The Congress has reconciled itself to special treatment of the Hindu-Muslim-Sikh tangle. There are sound historical reasons for it, but the Congress will not extend that doctrine in any shape or form. I listened to the list of special interests. So far as the untouchables are concerned, I have not yet quite grasped what Dr. Ambedkar has to say but, of course, the Congress will share the onus with Dr. Ambedkar of representing the interests of the untouchables. The interests of the untouchables are as dear to the Congress as the interests of any other body or of any other individual throughout the length and breadth of India. Therefore, I would most strongly resist any further special representation. Under adult suffrage, labour units certainly do not require any special representation; landlords most decidedly not, and I will give you my reason. There is no desire on the part of the Congress, and there is no desire on the part of our dumb paupers, to dispossess landlords of their possessions, but they would have landlords to act as trustees for their tenants. I think that it should be a matter of pride for the landlords to feel that their ryots, the millions

living in villages, would prefer them as their candidates and as their representatives than others coming from other parts or some one from among themselves.

What will happen is that the landlords will have to make common cause with the ryots, and what can be nobler, what can be better? But if the landlords insisted on special treatment and special representation in either Chamber if there are two Chambers, or in the one popular chamber, I am afraid that it would be really throwing the apple of discord into our midst and I am hoping that no such claim will be put forward on behalf of the landlords or any such interest.

Then I come to my friends the Europeans, whom naturally Mr. Gavin Jones claims to represent. I would suggest to him humbly that hitherto they have been the privileged class, they have received the protection that this foreign Government could give and they have received it liberally. If they would now make common cause with the masses of India, they need not be afraid as Mr. Gavin Jones said he was afraid, and he read from some document. I have not read it. It may be that some Indians also may say: "Oh, yes, if Europeans, Englishmen, want to be elected by us we are not going to elect them," but I would undertake to take Mr. Gavin Jones throughout the length and breadth of India and show to him that he will be preferred to an Indian if he will make common cause with us. Take Charlie Andrews. I assure you that he will be elected a delegate in any constituency in India without the slightest difficulty. Ask him whether he has not been received throughout the length and breadth of India with open arms. I could multiply the instance. I appeal to the Europeans to try once to live on the good-

will of the people and not seek to have their interests specially safeguarded or protected which would be the wrong way to go about the business. If they would live in India I would want them to live, I would beseech them to live as one of us. In any case I do feel that in any scheme to which the Congress can be party, there is no room for the protection of special interests. The special interests are automatically protected when you have got adult suffrage.

So far as the Christians are concerned, if I may cite the testimony of one who is no longer with us, I know that he said: "We want no special protection," and I have letters from Christian organisations saying that they wanted no special protection, and that the special protection that they would get would be by right of humble service.

#### OATH OF ALLEGIANCE

Now I come to a very delicate point, that is, the Oath of Allegiance. I am not able to give any opinion just now, because I want to know what it is to be. If it is to be complete freedom, if it is to be complete independence for India, the Oath of Allegiance naturally will be of one character. If it is to be a subject India, then I have no place there. Therefore it is not possible for me to-day to give any opinion upon the question of the Oath of Allegiance.

#### NOMINATIONS

Then the last question: What provision, if any, shall be made in each Chamber for nominated members? Well, in the scheme that the Congressmen have adumbrated there is no room for nominated members. I can understand experts coming, or men whose advice might be sought. They would give their advice and

they would retire. I cannot see the slightest justification for clothing them with votes. Votes are given only by popular representatives if we want to have a democratic institution undiluted. Therefore I cannot possibly endorse a scheme where there are nominated members, but that brings me back to sub-head (v). Supposing I had that in mind—because we have that in the Congress also—that we want women to be elected, we want Europeans to be elected, we certainly want untouchables to be elected, we want Christians to be elected, and I know well enough that these are very large minorities, but still these are minorities; and supposing that constituencies so misbehave themselves as not to elect women or Europeans or untouchables or, say, landlords, and they do not do so for no reasonable justification whatsoever, I would have, then, a clause in the Constitution which would enable this elected legislature to elect or nominate them. But then it would be a method of electing those who should have been but have not been elected. Perhaps I have not been able to express my meaning clearly, so I will give you an illustration. We have in one Provincial Congress Council exactly a rule of this character. We have asked the constituencies to elect so many women, so many Mussulmans, so many untouchables to the Council but if they fail to do so, it is done by the elected body, not from among themselves but from women who might have been candidates or untouchables, who might have been candidates or Mussulmans, who might have been candidates, and thus they will complete the quota. That is what we do. I would not mind; on the contrary, I would welcome some such saving clause in order that constituencies may not misbehave; but in the first instance I would trust the constituencies to elect all

classes of people and not become clannish or caste-ridden. The Congress mentality, I may assure you, is wholly and absolutely against caste and against the doctrine of superiority and inferiority. Congress is cultivating a spirit of absolute equality.

I am sorry for having taken so much of your time but I am thankful to the Chairman for having given me this indulgence.\*

\* A discussion followed this speech :

Sir Akbar Hydari: May I ask one question. With regard to the 500,000 villages or electorates, would they elect first to the Provincial Council and then the Provincial Councils elect to the Federal Legislatures, or would you have separate electorates for the Provincial Councils and the Federal Legislature?

Gandhiji: May I suggest, Sir, in the first instance, in answer to Sir Akbar Hydari, that if we accept the general outline of the scheme that I have adumbrated, all these things can really be settled without the slightest difficulty; but the special question that Sir Akbar has asked, I will answer by saying that in the scheme that I was trying to propound, the villages will be electing the electors or the voters: that the village will elect one man and say: "You will exercise the vote for us." He will become their agent for the election either to the Provincial Legislature or to the Central Legislature.

Sir Akbar Hydari: Then that man would have a dual capacity to vote in the elections for the Provincial Council as well as to the Central Legislature?

Gandhiji: He can have that, but to-day I was talking simply of the election to the Central Legislature.

Sir Akbar Hydari: Would you rule out any idea of the Provincial Legislature so elected electing to Federal Legislature?

Gandhiji: I do not rule it out but that does not commend itself to me. If that is the special meaning of "indirect election", I rule it out. I use the term "indirect election" vaguely. If it has any such technical meaning, I do not know.

## CONGRESS AND THE MINORITIES

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When the Minorities Sub-Committee of the R. T. C. met on the morning of the 8th October 1931, the Chairman, Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, called upon Mr. Gandhi to speak first. Mr. Gandhi in announcing the failure of negotiations said :

Prime Minister and Friends,—It is with deep sorrow and deeper humiliation that I have to announce utter failure on my part to secure an agreed solution of the communal question through informal conversations among and with the representatives of different groups. I apologise to you, Mr. Prime Minister and the other colleagues for the waste of a precious week. My only consolation lies in the fact that when I accepted the burden of carrying on these talks, I knew that there was not much hope of success and still more in the fact that I am not aware of having spared any effort to reach a solution.

But to say that the conversations have to our utter shame failed is not to say the whole truth. Causes of failure were inherent in the composition of the Indian delegation. We are almost all not elected representatives of the parties or groups whom we are presumed to represent ; we are here by nomination of the Government. Nor are those whose presence was absolutely necessary for an agreed solution to be found here. Further you will allow me to say that this was hardly the time to summon the Minorities Committee. It lacks the sense of reality, in that we do not know what it is that we are going to get. If we knew in a definite manner that we are going to get the thing we want, we should hesitate fifty times before we threw it away in a sinful wrangle, as it would be if the

getting of it must depend upon the ability of the present delegation to produce an agreed solution of the communal tangle. The solution can be the crown of the *Swaraj* Constitution, not its foundation, if only because our differences have hardened—if they have not arisen—by reason of the foreign domination. I have not a shadow of a doubt that the iceberg of communal differences will melt under the warmth of the sun of freedom.

I therefore venture to suggest that the Minorities Committee be adjourned *sine die* and that the fundamentals of the Constitution be hammered into shape as quickly as may be. Meanwhile the informal work of discovering a true solution of the communal problem will and must continue; only it must not halt or be allowed to block the progress of constitution-building. Attention must be diverted from it and concentrated on the main part of the structure.

I hardly need to point out to the Committee that my failure does not mean the end of all hope of arriving at an agreed solution. My failure does not even mean my utter defeat; there is no such word in my dictionary. My confession merely means failure of the special effort for which I presumed to ask for a week's indulgence which you so generously gave.

I propose to use the failure as a stepping-stone to success, and I invite you all to do likewise; but should all effort at agreement fail, even when the Round Table Conference reaches the end of its labours, I would suggest the addition of a clause to the expected Constitution appointing a judicial tribunal that would examine all claims and give its final decision on all the points that may be left unsettled.



Nor need this Committee think that the time given for enabling informal conversations to be carried on has been altogether wasted. You will be glad to learn that many friends, not members of the delegation, have been giving their attention to the question. Among these I would mention Sir Geoffrey Corbett. He has produced a scheme of redistribution of the Punjab which, though it has not found acceptance, is in my opinion well worth studying. I am asking Sir Geoffrey if he will kindly elaborate and circulate it among the members. Our Sikh colleagues have also produced another which is at least worthy of study. Sir Hubert Carr produced last night an ingenious and novel proposal to set up for the Punjab two Legislatures, the lower to satisfy the Mussulman claim and the upper nearly satisfying the Sikh claim. Though I am no believer in a bicameral legislature, I am much attracted by Sir Hubert's proposal and I would invite him to pursue it further with the same zeal with which, I gratefully admit, he followed and contributed to the informal deliberations.

Lastly, inasmuch as the only reason for my appearance at these deliberations is that I represent the Indian National Congress, I must clearly set forth its position. In spite of appearances to the contrary, especially at the Round Table Conference, the Congress claims to represent the whole nation, and most decidedly the dumb millions, among whom are included the untouchables as also in a way the more unfortunate and neglected classes known as Backward Races.

Here is the Congress position in a nutshell. I am reading the resolution of the Congress and of the Working Committee :

The Congress has, since its inception, set up pure nationalism as its ideal. It has endeavoured to break down communal barriers. The following Lahore resolution was the culminating point in its advance towards nationalism :

'In view of the lapse of the Nehru Report, it is unnecessary to declare the policy of the Congress regarding communal questions, the Congress believing that in an independent India, communal questions can only be solved on strictly national lines. But as the Sikhs in particular, and the Muslims and the other minorities in general, had expressed dissatisfaction over the solution of communal questions proposed in the Nehru Report, this Congress assures the Sikhs, the Muslims and other minorities that no solution thereof in any future constitution will be acceptable to the Congress that does not give full satisfaction to the parties concerned.'

Hence the Congress is precluded from setting forth any communal solution of the communal problem, but at this critical juncture in the history of the nation it is felt that the Working Committee should suggest for adoption by the country a solution, though communal in appearance, yet as nearly national as possible, and generally acceptable to the communities concerned. The Working Committee therefore after full and free discussion unanimously passed the following scheme :

1. (a) The article in the Constitution relating to fundamental rights shall include a guarantee to the communities concerned of the protection of their cultures, languages, scripts, education, profession and practice of religion and religious endowments.

(b) Personal laws shall be "protected by specific provisions to be embodied in the Constitution.

(c) Protection of political and other rights of minority communities in the various Provinces shall be the concern [and] be within the jurisdiction of the Federal Government.

2. The franchise shall be extended to all adult men [and] women.

*Note :—*The Working Committee is committed to adult franchise by the resolution of the Kharachi Congress and cannot entertain any alternative franchise. In view however of misapprehensions in some quarters, the Committee wishes to make it clear that in any event the franchise shall be uniform and so extensive as to reflect on the electoral roll the proportion in the population of every community.

3. (a) Joint electorates shall form the basis of representation in the future constitution of India.

(b) That for the Hindus in Sindh and the Muslims in Assam and the Sikhs in the North-West Frontier and Punjab, and for Hindus and Muslims in any province where they are less than 25 per cent. of the population, seats shall be reserved in the Federal

and Provincial Legislature on the basis of population with the right to contest additional seats.

4. Appointments shall be made by non-party public service commissions which shall prescribe the minimum qualifications and which shall have due regard to the efficiency of the public service as well as to the principle of equal opportunity to all the communities for a fair share in the public services of the country.

5. In the formation of the Federal and Provincial Cabinets, the interests of minority communities should be recognised by convention.

6. The North-West Frontier Province and Baluchistan shall have the same form of government and administration as other provinces.

7. Sindh shall be constituted into a separate province provided that the people of Sindh are prepared to bear the financial burden of the separated province.

8. The future constitution of the country shall be Federal. The residuary powers shall vest in the federating units unless on further examination it is found to be against the best interests of India.

The Working Committee has adopted the foregoing scheme as a compromise between the proposals based on undiluted communalisms and undiluted nationalism. Whilst on the one hand, the Working Committee hopes that the whole nation will endorse the scheme; on the other, it assures those who take extreme views and cannot adopt it that the Committee will gladly, as it is bound to by the Lahore resolution, accept without reservation any other scheme if it commands the acceptance of all the parties concerned.

That is the Congress resolution.

If however a national solution is impossible and the Congress scheme proves unacceptable, I am not precluded from endorsing any other reasonable scheme which may be acceptable to the parties concerned. The Congress position on this question therefore is one of greatest possible accommodation. Where it cannot help, it will not obstruct. Needless to say that the Congress will whole-heartedly support any scheme of private arbitration. It seems to have been represented that I am opposed to any representation of the untouchables on the legislatures. This is a travesty of the truth.

What I have said and what I must repeat is that I am opposed to their special representation. I am convinced that this can do them no good and may do much harm. But the Congress is wedded to adult franchise. Therefore millions of them can be placed on the voters' roll. It is impossible to conceive that with untouchability fast disappearing, nominees of these voters can be boycotted by the others. But what these people need more than election to the legislatures is protection from social and religious persecution. Custom which is often more powerful than law, has brought them to a degradation of which every thinking Hindu has need to feel ashamed and to do penance. I should therefore have the most drastic legislation rendering criminal all the special persecution to which these fellow-countrymen of mine are subjected by the so-called superior classes. Thank God, the conscience of the Hindu has been stirred, and untouchability will soon be a relic of our sinful past.

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## THE SUPREME COURT

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On October 23, 1931, Mr. Gandhi put before the Federal Structure Committee the Congress view of a Federal Court in India :

Lord Chancellor and Fellow Delegates,—I feel considerable hesitation in speaking on this subject which has been rendered so highly technical by the course that the discussion has taken ; but I feel that I owe a duty to you and a duty to the Congress which I represent. I know that the Congress holds some decided views on the question of the Federal Court—views which, I am afraid, may be very distasteful to a large number of the delegates here. Whatever they are, seeing that they are held by a responsible body, it is, I suppose, necessary that I should at least present them to you.

I see that the discussions proceed, if not upon utter distrust, upon considerable distrust of ourselves. It is assumed that the National Government will not be able to conduct its affairs in an impartial manner. The communal tangle also is colouring the discussion. The Congress, on the other hand, bases the whole of its policy on trust and on the confidence that when we shall have come into power, we shall also come to a sense of our responsibility and all the communal bias will drop out. But should it prove otherwise, then too the Congress would run the boldest risks, because, without running risks we shall not be able to come to exercise real responsibility. So long as we have the mental reservation that we have to rest upon some-

foreign power for our guidance and for conducting our affairs at a critical juncture, so long, in my opinion, there is no responsibility.

One feels also embarrassed by the fact that we really are trying to discuss this thing without knowing where we shall be. I should give one opinion if Defence was not under the control of the responsible Government, and another opinion if Defence was under our own control. I proceed upon the assumption that if we are to enjoy responsibility in the real sense of the term Defence will be under our control, under National control in every sense of the term. I entirely sympathise with Dr. Ambedkar in the difficulty that he raised. It is all very well to have a judgment of the highest tribunal, but if the writ of that tribunal does not run beyond the confines of its own Court, that tribunal will be a laughing-stock of the nation and of the whole world. What is then to be done in connection with that writ? What Mr. Jinnah said, of course, came home—that the Military would be there—but it will be the Crown that will run the writ. Then, I would say, let the High Court also, or the Federal Court, be under the Crown. In my opinion, the Supreme Court has to be, if we are responsible, under the responsible Government and therefore the process of carrying out the writ has also to be made good by the responsible Government. Personally I do not share the fears that actuate Dr. Ambedkar, but I think that his objection is a very reasonable objection and that a Court which gives judgments should also have perfect confidence that its judgments will be respected by those who are affected by its judgment and hence I would suggest that the judges should have the power of framing rules in order to

regulate matters in connection with those judgments. Naturally the enforcement will not rest with the Court; the enforcement will rest with the executive authority, but the executive authority would have to conform to the rules that might be framed by the Court.

We fancy that this constitution is going to give us every detail in connection with the composition of this Court. I respectfully differ from that view in its entirety. I think that this constitution will give us the framework of the Federal Court, will define the jurisdiction of the Federal Court, but the rest will be left to the Federal Government to evolve. I cannot possibly understand that the constitution is also going to tell us how many years the judges are to serve, or whether they are to resign or retire at the age of 70, or 95, or 90; or 65; I think that these will be matters to be taken up by the Federal Government. Of course we bring in the Crown at the end of almost every sentence. I must confess that, according to the conception of the Congress, there is no question of the Crown. India is to enjoy complete independence, and if India enjoys complete independence, whoever may be the supreme authority there, that supreme authority will be responsible for the appointment of judges and several other matters which to-day belong to the Crown.

It is a fundamental belief with the Congress that, whatever course the Constitution takes, there should be our own Privy Council in India. The Privy Council's portals, if it is really to give relief to the poor people in matters of the highest importance, should be open to the poorest people in the land and I think that is impossible if the Privy Council in England is to decide our fate in matters of the greatest importance.

There, too, I would guide ourselves by implicit trust in the ability of our judges to pronounce wise and absolutely impartial decisions. I know that we run very great risks. The Privy Council here is an ancient institution and an institution which justly commands very great regard and respect; but in spite of all the respect that I have for the Privy Council, I cannot bring myself to believe that we also will not be able to have a Privy Council of our own which will command universal esteem. Because England can boast of very fine institutions, I do not think that therefore we must be tied down to those institutions. If we learn anything whatsoever from England, we should learn to erect those institutions ourselves; otherwise there is a poor chance for this nation whose representatives we claim to be. Therefore I would ask us all to have sufficient trust and confidence in ourselves at the present moment. Our beginning may be very small but, if we have strong, true and honest hearts to give decisions, it does not matter in the slightest degree that we have not got the legal traditions which the judges in England claim.

#### WIDEST JURISDICTION

That being my view, I feel that this Federal Court should be a Court of the widest jurisdiction possible and not decide only cases that arise from the administration of Federal Laws. Federal Laws of course will be there, but it should have the amplest jurisdiction to try all the cases that may come from the four corners of India.

It is, then, a question where the subjects of the Princes will be and where they will come in. Subject to what the Princes may have to say, I would suggest, with the greatest deference and with equal hesitation, that there will be, I hope at the end of it, if we are going to make something out of this Conference, something



which will be common to all India, to all the inhabitants of India, whether they come from the States or whether they come from the rest of India. If there is something in common between all of us, naturally the Supreme Court will be the guardian of the rights that we may consider to be common to all. What those rights should be I am totally unable to say. It is entirely for the Princes to say what they can be and what they cannot be. In view of the fact that they represent here not only their own Houses but have taken on themselves the tremendous responsibility of representing their subjects also at this Conference, I would certainly make a humble but fervent appeal to them that they would of their own accord come forth with some scheme, whereby their subjects also may feel that though they are not directly represented at this table their voices find adequate expression through these noble Princes themselves.

#### SALARIES

So far as the salary is concerned, you will laugh, naturally, but the Congress believes that it is an impossible thing for us who, in terms of wealth, are a nation of dwarfs, to vie with the British Government which represent to-day giants in wealth. India, whose average income is 3d. per day, can ill afford to pay the high salaries that are commanded here. I feel that it is a thing which we will have to unlearn if we are going to have voluntary rule in India. It is all very well so long as the British bayonet is there to squeeze out of these poor people taxes to pay these salaries of Rs. 10,000 a month, Rs. 5,000 a month, and Rs. 20,000 a month. I do not consider that my country has sunk so low that it will not be able to produce sufficient men who will live somewhat in correspondence with the lives of the millions and still

serve India nobly, truly and well. I do not believe for one moment that legal talent has to be bought if it is to remain honest.

I recall the names of Motilal Nehru, C. R. Das, Manomohan Ghosh, Badrudin Tyabji and a host of others, who gave their legal talent absolutely free of charge and served their country faithfully and well. The taunt may be flung in my face that they did so because they were able to charge princely fees in their own professional work. I reject that argument for the simple reason that I have known every one of them with the exception of Manomohan Ghosh. It was not that they had plenty of money and therefore gave freely of their talent when India required it. I have seen them living the life of poor people and in perfect contentment. Whatever may be the position at the present moment, I can point out to you several lawyers of distinction who, if they had not come to the national cause, would to-day be occupying seats of the High Court benches in all parts of India. I have therefore absolute confidence that when we come to frame our own rules and so on, we will do so in a patriotic spirit and taking account of the miserable state that the millions of India occupy.

One word more and I have finished. Seeing that the Congress holds the view that this Federal Court or Supreme Court—whichever you call it—will occupy the position of the highest tribunal beyond which no man who is an inhabitant of India can go, its jurisdiction, in my opinion, will be limitless. It will have jurisdiction, so far as Federal matters are concerned, to the extent that the Princes are also willing, but I cannot possibly imagine that we shall have two Supreme Courts, one in order to deal with merely Federal law and another

to deal with all the other matters that are not covered by the Federal administration or the Federal Government.

As things go, the Federal Government may concern itself with the minimum of subjects and therefore matters of the highest moment will be extra Federal. Who is to adjudicate upon these extra Federal matters if not this very Supreme Court? Therefore this Supreme Court or Federal Court will exercise double jurisdiction, if necessary treble jurisdiction. The greater the power that we give to this Federal Court, I think, the greater the confidence we shall be able to inspire in the world and also in the nation itself.

I am sorry to have taken up these precious minutes of the time of the Conference but I felt that, in spite of my great reluctance to speak to you on this question of a Federal Court, I must give you the views that many of us in the Congress have been holding for a long time and which, we would, if we could, spread throughout the length and breadth of India. I know the terrible handicap under which I am labouring. All the most distinguished lawyers are arrayed against me; the Princes also are probably arrayed against me so far as the salaries and jurisdiction of this Court are concerned. But I would be guilty of neglect of duty to the Congress and to you, if I did not give you the views that the Congress and I hold so strongly on the matter of the Federal Court.

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## THE MINORITIES QUESTION

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At the last meeting of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference, Mahatma Gandhi entered a vehement protest against what is known as the Minorities Pact which was supported by the Premier. He denounced the scheme and said that the "Congress was entirely out of it": It was in this speech too that Mr. Gandhi made the statement with regard to separate electorates for the untouchables, that "If he was the only person to resist this thing he would resist it with his life."

### THE MAIN PURPOSE

Prime Minister, and Fellow Delegates,—It is not without very considerable hesitation and shame that I take part in the discussion on the Minorities question. I have not been able to read with the care and attention that it deserves the memorandum sent to the delegates on behalf of certain Minorities and received this morning. Before I offer a few remarks on that memorandum, with your permission and with all the deference and respect that are your due, I would express my dissent from the view that you put before this Committee that the inability to solve the communal question was hampering the progress of constitution-building and that it was an indispensable condition prior to the building of any such constitution. I expressed at an early stage of the sittings of this Committee that I did not share that view. The experience that I have since gained has confirmed me in that view and, if you will pardon me for saying so, it was because of the emphasis that was laid last year and repeated this year upon this difficulty that the different communities were encouraged to press with all the vehemence at their command their own respective views. It would have been against human nature if they had done

otherwise. All of them thought that this was the time to press forward their claims for all they were worth, and I venture to suggest again that this very emphasis has defeated the purpose which I have no doubt it had in view. This is the reason why we have failed to arrive at an agreement. I, therefore, associate myself entirely with the view expressed by Sir Chimanlal Setalvad that it is not this question which is the fulcrum, it is not this question which is the central fact, but the central fact is the constitution-building.

I am quite certain that you did not convene this Round Table Conference and bring us all 6,000 miles away from homes and occupations to settle the communal question, but you convened us, you made deliberate declarations that we were invited to come here to share the process of constitution-building. You declared that before we went away from your hospitable shores, we should have the certain conviction that we had built up an honourable and a respectable framework for the freedom of India and that it awaited only the *imprimatur* of the approval of the House of Commons and the House of Lords.

Now at the present moment we are face to face with a wholly different situation, namely, that, because there is no communal settlement agreed to by us, there is to be no building of the Constitution, and that, as the last resort and as the last touch you will announce the policy of His Majesty's Government in connection with the Constitution and all the matters that may arise from it. I cannot help feeling that it would be a sorry ending to a Conference which was brought into being with so much trumpeting and with so much hope excited in the minds and in the breasts of many people.

Coming to this document,\* I accept the thanks that have been given to me by Sir Hubert Carr. Had it not been for the remarks that I made when I shouldered that burden and had not it been for my utter failure to bring about a solution, Sir Hubert Carr rightly says he would not have found the very admirable solution that he has been able, in common with the other Minorities, to present to this Committee for consideration and finally for the consideration and approval of His Majesty's Government.

I will not deprive Sir Hubert Carr and his associates of the feeling of satisfaction that evidently actuates them, but in my opinion what they have done is to sit by the carcase and they have performed the laudable feat of dissecting that carcase.

As representing the predominant political organisation in India, I have no hesitation in saying to His Majesty's Government and to those friends who seek to represent the Minorities mentioned against their names, and indeed to the whole world, that this scheme is not one designed to achieve responsible Government, though undoubtedly, it is designed to share power with the bureaucracy.

If that is the intention—and it is the intention running through the whole of that document—I wish them well, and Congress is entirely out of it. The Congress will wander, no matter how many years, in the wilderness rather than lend itself to a proposal under

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\* The so-called agreed scheme between the smaller Minorities and the Mussulmans. Sir H. Carr in his speech sarcastically thanked Gandhiji's failure to bring about a solution of the Minorities question which, he said, had resulted in bringing the Minorities together.

which the hardy tree of freedom and responsible Government can never grow.

I am astonished that Sir Hubert Carr should tell us that they have evolved a scheme which, being designed only for a temporary period, would not damage the cause of nationalism, but at the end of ten years we would all find ourselves hugging one another and throwing ourselves into one another's laps. My political experience teaches me a wholly different lesson. If this responsible government, whenever it comes, is to be inaugurated under happy auspices, the nation should not undergo the process of vivisection to which this scheme subjects it; it is a strain which no national government can possibly bear.

There is the coping-stone to this structure, and I am surprised, Mr. Prime Minister, that you allowed yourself to mention this as if it were an indisputable fact, namely, that the proposals may be taken as being acceptable to well over 115 millions of people, or about 46 per cent. of the population of India. You had a striking demonstration of the inaccuracy of this figure. You have had, on behalf of the women, a complete repudiation of special representation, and as they happen to be one-half of the population of India, this 46 per cent. is somewhat reduced. But not only that: the Congress may not be a very powerful organisation, but I have not hesitated to make the claim, and I am not ashamed to repeat the claim, that the Congress claims to represent 85 per cent. or 95 per cent. of the population not merely of British India but of the whole of India. Subject to all the questions that may be raised, I repeat the claim with all the emphasis at my command that the Congress, by right of service, claims to represent that

population which is called the agricultural population of India. I would accept the challenge, if the Government were to issue the challenge, that we should have a referendum in India and you would immediately find whether the Congress does not represent them. But I go a step further. At the present moment, if you were to examine the records of the prisons of India, you would find that the Congress represented there, and represents on its register, a very large number of Mussulmans. Several thousand Mussulmans went to jail last year under the banner of the Congress. The Congress to-day has several thousand Mussulmans on its register. The Congress has thousands of untouchables on its register. The Congress has Indian Christians also on its register. I do not know that there is a single community which is not represented on the Congress register. With all deference to the Nawab Sahib of Chhatari, even landlords and even mill-owners and millionaires are represented there. I admit that they are coming to the Congress slowly, cautiously, but the Congress is trying to serve them also. The Congress undoubtedly represents labour. Therefore this claim that the proposals set forth in this Memorandum are acceptable to well over 115,000,000 of people needs to be taken with a very great deal of reservation and caution.

One word more and I shall have done. You have had presented to you and circulated to the members, I hope, the Congress proposal in connection with the communal problem. I venture to submit that of all the schemes that I have seen, it is the most workable scheme, but I may be in error there. I admit that it has not commended itself to the representatives of the communities at this table, but it has commended itself to the representatives of these very classes in India. It is not the creation of the brain,



but it is the creation of a committee on which various important parties were represented. You have that scheme on behalf of the Congress; but the Congress has also suggested that there should be an impartial arbitration. Through arbitration all over the world people have adjusted their differences, and the Congress is always willing to accept any decision of an arbitration court. I have myself ventured to suggest that there might be appointed by the Government a judicial tribunal which would examine this case and give its decision. But, if none of these ways are acceptable and this is to be the *sine qua non* of any constitution-building, then, I say, it will be much better for us that we should remain without so-called responsible Government than that we should accept this scheme put forward by Sir Hubert Carr and others.

I would like to repeat what I have said before, that while the Congress will always accept any solution that may be acceptable to the Hindus, the Mussulmans and the Sikhs, it will be no party to special reservation or special electorates for any other Minorities. The Congress will always endorse clauses or reservations as to fundamental rights and civil liberty. It will be open to everybody to be placed on the voters' roll and to appeal to the common body of the electorates. In my humble opinion, the scheme gathered by Sir Hubert Carr is the very negation of responsible Government, the very negation of nationalism. Heaven help India if India have representatives elected by these several special, cut up groups. That European, and that European only, who commands the approval of the common electorate, and not that of the mere Europeans, will serve India as a whole. The scheme dooms the responsible Government to be always contending against these special

interests which will always be in conflict against the national spirit—against this body of 85 per cent. of agricultural population. To me, it is an unthinkable thing. If we are to bring into being responsible Government and if we are going to get real freedom, then I venture to suggest that it should be the proud privilege and the duty of every one of these so-called special classes to seek entry into the Legislatures through the open front door, through the election and approval of the common body of electorates. You know that Congress is wedded to adult suffrage and under adult suffrage it will be open to all to be placed on the voters' list. More than that nobody can ask.

#### SEPARATING THE UNTOUCHABLES

I can understand the claims advanced by other Minorities, but the claims advanced on behalf of the untouchables is to me the unkindest cut of all. It means perpetual bar sinister. I would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables even for the sake of winning the freedom of India. I claim myself, in my own person, to represent the vast mass of the untouchables. Here I speak not merely on behalf of the Congress, but I speak on my own behalf, and I claim that I would get, if there was a referendum of the untouchables, their vote and that I would top the poll. And I would work from one end of India to the other to tell the untouchables that separate electorates and separate reservation is not the way to remove this bar sinister. Let this Committee and let the whole world know that to-day there is a body of Hindu reformers who feel that this is a shame, not of the untouchables, but of orthodox Hinduism, and they are therefore pledged to remove this blot of untouchability. We do not want on our register and on our census untouchables classified as a separate class. Sikhs may remain as such

in perpetuity, so may Moslems, so may Europeans. Would untouchables remain untouchables in perpetuity? I would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived. Therefore with all my regard for Dr. Ambedkar and for his desire to see the untouchables uplifted, with all my regard for his ability I must say that here is a great error under which he has laboured and perhaps the bitter experiences he has undergone have for the moment warped his judgment. It hurts me to have to say this but I would be untrue to the cause of untouchables, which is as dear to me as life itself, if I did not say it. I will not bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world. I am speaking with a due sense of responsibility when I say it is not a proper claim which is registered by Dr. Ambedkar when he seeks to speak for the whole of the untouchables in India. It will create a division in Hinduism which I cannot possibly look forward to with any satisfaction whatsoever. I do not mind the untouchables being converted to Islam or Christianity. I should tolerate that, but I cannot possibly tolerate what is in store for Hinduism if there are these two divisions set up in every village. Those who speak of political rights of untouchables do not know India and do not know how Indian society is to-day constructed. Therefore I want to say with all the emphasis that I can command that if I was the only person to resist this thing, I will resist it with my life.

## DEFENCE

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On November 17, 1931, Mahatma Gandhi put before the Federal Structure Committee the Congress view on the question of Army and External Relations :

Lord Chancellor and Fellow Delegates,—I know that a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders in having to give the Congress view on this most important question. I have intervened at this stage because I am in one of these November fogs. I do not know whether there will or will not be a Report upon this discussion. I do not know also whether we are going summarily to close these deliberations or whether they are to be extended. So far as I am concerned, I came here with the intention, if necessary, of wintering in England. Therefore, time is of no consequence if, perchance, the purpose of the Congress can be obtained through friendly negotiation and consultation. I have been sent here with the deliberate intention of exploring every possible avenue to achieve an honourable settlement, whether by open discussion at this table or by private conferences with Ministers and public men who influence public opinion here, and with all those who are interested in questions vitally affecting India. I am under obligation not to leave a single stone unturned in order to arrive at a settlement, if only because Congress is wedded to a policy which is known to you all. Congress is intent upon reaching its goal at the earliest possible moment, and holds also very decided views upon all these matters. What is more to the purpose, it is to-day, or considers itself to-day, capable of shouldering all the responsibilities that flow from responsible self-government.

That being the case, I thought that I could not possibly allow the discussion on this most important matter to close without placing, as humbly as I could, and as briefly as I could, the Congress view on the question.

#### ESSENCE OF RESPONSIBILITY

As you all are aware, the Congress case is that there should be complete responsibility transferred to India. That means and it has been so stated expressly in the Congress resolution, that there should be complete control over Defence and over External Affairs. But it also contemplates adjustments. I feel that we ought not to deceive ourselves, and deceive the world, into thinking that we would be getting responsible government although we may not ask for responsibility in this vital matter. I think, that a nation that has no control over her own Defence Forces and over her External Affairs, is hardly a responsible nation. If a nation's Defence is controlled by an outside agency, no matter how friendly it is, then that nation is certainly not responsibly governed. This is what our English teachers have taught us times without number, and therefore, some Englishmen twitted me also when they heard the talk that we would have responsible Government but we would not have or would not claim control over our own Defence Forces.

I am here very respectfully to claim, on behalf of the Congress, complete control over the Army, over the Defence Forces and over External Affairs. I put in External Affairs also so as to avoid having to speak on it when Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru speaks on that subject.

To this conclusion we have come with the greatest deliberation. If we do not get this control at the time of embarking upon responsibility because we are not deemed fit for it, I cannot conceive a time when, because-

we are enjoying responsibility in other matters, we would be suddenly found fit to control our own Defence Forces.

#### AN ARMY OF OCCUPATION

I would like this Committee, for just a few brief moments, to understand what this Army at the present moment means. This Army, in my opinion, whether it is Indian or whether it is British, is really an Army of Occupation. It does not matter to us that they are Sikhs, or that they are Gurkhas or that they are Pathans or that they are men from Madras or that they are Rajputs; no matter who they are, they are foreigners to me whilst they are in that Army, controlled by an alien government. I cannot speak to them. Soldiers have come to me stealthily and have been afraid even of speaking to me, because they felt that they might be reported. It is not possible for us ordinarily to go to the places where the soldiers are kept. They are also taught not to regard us as their countrymen. Unlike any other country in the world, there is absolutely no intercourse between them and the ordinary civil population. This I give as my evidence before this Committee as a man who has endeavoured to come into touch in all parts of Indian life with all those with whom it was possible to do so, and this is not only my own personal experience but it is the experience of hundreds and thousands of Congressmen that there is an absolute wall between them and us.

I am quite aware that, therefore, it is a tremendous thing for us at once to shoulder that responsibility and to have control of this Army, even excluding the British soldiers. That is the unfortunate, unhappy position created for us, I am sorry to have to say, by our rulers. But even so, we must take up the responsibility.

Then there is the British section of the Army. What is the purpose of the British Army? Every Indian child knows that that British Army is there, along with the Indian Army, for the defence of British interests, not alone for avoiding or resisting foreign aggression. I am sorry to have to make these remarks, but that is precisely what I have learned and have experienced, and it would be unjust even to my British friends if I did not give expression to the truth as I have seen it and as I hold it. Thirdly, it is an Army intended to suppress rebellion against British authority.

These, then, are the main functions of that Army, and hence it does not surprise me that Englishmen should take the view they do. If I were an Englishman and had also the ambition to rule another nation, I would do precisely the same thing. I would take hold of Indians and train them as soldiers, and I would train them to be loyal to me, so loyal that they would at my command shoot anybody I desired them to shoot. Who was it that shot people at Jallianwalla Bagh, if it was not their own countrymen?

The existence of the British troops is also intended to serve the purpose of holding the balance between these different Indian soldiers evenly. It undoubtedly protects, as it must protect, the British Officers, and it protects British lives. Again, I do not make any complaint if I should assume the premise that it was right for Great Britain to hold India to-day and to continue to hold India no matter under what altered conditions.

#### A VITAL CONDITION

That being so, I have no difficulty in answering the question which Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru would not face and which Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya also

would not face. Both of them said that, not being experts, they were not able to say to what extent this Army could be or should be reduced. I, however, have no such difficulty. I have no difficulty in saying what should happen to this Army. I would say emphatically that before I could possibly shoulder the burden of running the Government of India under the terrible handicaps under which we are labouring as a legacy of alien rule, the whole of this Army should be disbanded if it does not pass under my control.

This being my fundamental position, I would say that if you, British Ministers and British people, really wish well by India, if you will transfer power now to us, then, regard this as a vital condition that the Army should pass under our control in its entirety.

#### A CHERISHED DREAM

But then I have told you that I know the risk that is attendant upon it. The Army will not accept my command. I know that very well. I know that the British Commander-in-Chief will not accept my command; nor would the Sikhs, nor the proud Rajputs—none of them would willingly accept my command. But even so, I expect to exercise that command with the goodwill of the British people. They will be there at the time of transferring the command to teach a new lesson to these very soldiers and to tell them that they are after all serving their own countrymen if they do so. British troops may also be told: "Now you shall remain here not to protect British interests and British lives, but to protect India against foreign aggression, even against internal insurrection as if you were defending and serving your own countrymen." That is my dream.



I know that I shall not realise that dream here. That is what I feel. The evidence that is before me, the evidence of my senses, tells me that I am not going to realise that dream to-day and here as a result of the deliberations of this Conference. But I should still cherish that dream. It is the dream I should like to cherish up to the end of my time. Seeing the atmosphere here, I know that I cannot infect British statesmen or the British public with the idea or with the ideal that this could be also their cherished mission. But that is how I would interpret the Prime Minister's declaration; that is how I would interpret Lord Irwin's wishes. It should be the proud privilege and the proud duty of Great Britain now to initiate us in the mysteries of conducting our own defence. Having clipped our wings, it is their duty to give us wings wherewith we can fly, even as they fly. That is really my ambition and therefore I say I would wait till eternity if I cannot get control of defence. I refuse to deceive myself that I am going to embark upon responsible Government although I cannot control my Defence.

#### PAST RECORD

After all, India is not a nation which has never known how to defend herself. There is all the material there. There are the Mussulmans standing in no dread of foreign invasion. The Sikhs will refuse to think that they can be conquered by anybody. The Gurkha, immediately he develops the national mind, will say: "Alone, I can defend India." Then there are the Rajputs who are supposed to be responsible for a thousand Thermopylae. That is what the Englishman, Colonel Tod, has told us. Colonel Tod has taught us to believe that every pass in Rajputana is a Thermopylae. Do

these people stand in need of learning the arts of defence? I assume that if I shoulder the burden of responsibility, all these people are going to join hands. I am here writhing in agony to see that we have not yet come to terms on the communal question; but whenever the communal settlement comes, it must presuppose that we are going to trust each other. Whether the rule is predominantly Mussulman or Sikh or Hindu, they will not rule as Hindus or Mussulmans or Sikhs, but they will rule as Indians. If we have distrust of one another, then we want British people there if we do not want to be killed by one another. But then let us not talk of responsible Government.

I at least cannot possibly think that we have got responsible Government without control of the Army. I feel deep down at the bottom of my heart that if we are to have responsible Government—and the Congress wants responsible Government—the Congress has faith in itself, in the masses of the people, and in all those brave military races, and what is more, the Congress has faith also in Englishmen some day doing their duty and transferring complete control to us—we must infect the British with that love for India which would enable her to stand on her own feet. If the British people think that we shall require a century before that can be done, then for that century the Congress will wander in the wilderness. The Congress must go through that terrible fiery ordeal, it must go through the storm of distress, of misrepresentation and—if it becomes necessary and if it is God's will—a shower of bullets. If this happens, it will be because we cannot trust one another and because Englishmen and Indians have different angles of vision.

## SAFEGUARDS

That is my fundamental position. I do not want to go into it in detail. I have put this case as forcibly as I am capable of putting it. But if this one thing is admitted, I am resourceful enough to submit and frame safeguard after safeguard which will commend themselves to any unbiassed mind, provided that it is common cause that those safeguards must be in the interests of India. But I want to go further and endorse what Lord Irwin said, that although the safeguards in the Pact are stated to be in the interests of India, they must be considered as in the mutual interests of India and England. I do not conceive a single safeguard that will be only in the interests of India, not a single safeguard that will not be also in the interests of Great Britain, provided that we contemplate a partnership—a partnership at will and a partnership on absolutely equal terms.

The very reasons that I have given you to-day for demanding complete control for the Army are also reasons for pleading for, and for demanding control over, our external affairs.

## EXTERNAL AFFAIRS

Not being well versed in what is really meant by external affairs, and having to plead my ignorance of what is stated in those reports of the Round Table Conference on the subject, I asked my friends, Mr. Iyengar and Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, to give me a first lesson in what is meant by external affairs and foreign relations. I have got their reply before me. They state that the words mean relations with neighbouring powers, relations with Indian States, relations with other powers in international affairs, and relations

with the Dominions. If these are external affairs, I think we are quite capable of shouldering the burden and discharging our obligations in connection with external affairs. We can undoubtedly negotiate terms of peace with our own kith and kin, with our own neighbours, with our own countrymen—the Indian Princes. We can cultivate the friendliest relations with our neighbours the Afghans, and across the seas with the Japanese; and certainly we can negotiate with the Dominions also. If the Dominions will not have our countrymen to live there in perfect self-respect, we can deal with them.

It may be that I am talking out of folly, but you should understand that the Congress has thousands and tens of thousands of foolish men and women like me, and it is on behalf of these that I respectfully register this claim, again saying that with the safeguards we have conceived we shall literally fulfil our obligations.

Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya has sketched the safeguards. With much of what he has said I entirely associate myself, but those are not the only safeguards. If Englishmen and Indians put their heads together, sailing in the same direction with no mental reservation whatsoever, it is possible, I submit with every confidence, that we would bring into being safeguards which will be honourable alike to India and to England, and which would be a guarantee for the safety of every British life and the safety of every British interest to which India pledges her honour. Lord Chancellor, I cannot go further. I tender a thousand apologies for taking up the time of this meeting, but you can understand the feeling that is welling up in me sitting here day after day and thinking of it day and night, how these deliberations can come to a successful issue. It is a feeling of absolute goodwill towards Englishmen and a feeling of absolute service to my countrymen.

## COMMERCIAL DISCRIMINATION

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At the meeting of the Federal Structure Committee on November 19, 1931, Mr. Gandhi placed before it the Congress view regarding the claim of British merchants in India for financial safeguards in the future Indian Constitution:

Lord Chancellor and Friends,—I would like to tender my congratulations to Mr. Benthall on his very temperate statement and I wish that he could have seen his way not to spoil that admirable statement by importing two sentiments. One sentiment expressed by him was practically that Europeans or Britishers claimed what they are claiming, because of their having conferred certain benefits on India. I wish that he could have omitted this opinion, but having expressed it there should have been no surprise expressed as was expressed by Lord Reading, that there was a courteous retort from Sir Purshottamdas Thakurdas, and now, as we have heard, reinforced by Phiroze Sethna. I wish also that he could have omitted the threat that has been used in that statement on behalf of the great corporation that he represents. He said that the European support to the national demand was conditional upon Indian nationalists accepting the demands of the European Community expressed by Mr. Benthall, as also the separatist tendency expressed a few days ago in the demand for a separate electorate, and their joining that separatist combination about which it was my painful position to speak the other day. I have endeavoured to study the resolution passed at the last Conference. Although you are familiar with it, I want to read that resolution again, because I shall want to say a few things in connection with that resolution:

At the instance of the British commercial community the principle was generally agreed that there should be no discrimination between the rights of the British commercial community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian-born subjects.

The rest I need not read. I am extremely sorry, in spite of the great regard and respect I entertain for Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and Mr. Jayakar, to have to dissent from this sweeping resolution. I was therefore delighted yesterday when Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru readily admitted that it was vague and that it was susceptible of improvement. You will see the general character of this resolution if you will carefully study it. There is to be no discrimination between the rights of the British mercantile community, firms and companies trading in India and the rights of Indian-born subjects. If I have interpreted this correctly, I think that it is a terrific thing, and I, for one, cannot possibly commit the Congress to a resolution of this character, much less commit the future Government of India.

There is here no qualification whatsoever. The rights of the British commercial community are to stand on exactly the same footing as those of Indian born subjects. Therefore it is not as if there is to be any racial discrimination or anything of that kind; here the British commercial community enjoy absolutely the same rights as Indian-born subjects. I want to state with all the emphasis that I can command that I cannot even endorse the formula that the rights of all Indian-born subjects themselves could even be equal or guaranteed. I shall show you the reason presently.

#### TO EQUALISE CONDITIONS

I think that you will readily grant that in order to equalise conditions, the future Government of India would

be constantly obliged to do what the existing Government has neglected to do, namely, continually to discriminate in favour of the famishing Indians against those who have been blest by Nature or by the Government themselves with riches and other privileges. It will be necessary for the future Government perhaps to provide quarters free for labour, and the monied men of India might say: "If you provide quarters for them you should give corresponding grants to us although we do not require quarters of that nature." But the State could not do so. There it would undoubtedly be discrimination in favour of the poor people, and the monied men might then say, according to this formula, that it would be discrimination against them.

I therefore venture to suggest that this sweeping formula cannot possibly be accepted by us in this Conference when we are trying to assist His Majesty's Government—in so far as they will accept our assistance—in shaping the future Constitution of India.

#### THE FORMULA FOR DISCRIMINATION

But having said this I want to associate myself completely with the British merchants and European houses in their legitimate demand that there should be no racial discrimination. I, who had to fight the great South African Government for over 20 years in order to resist their colour bar and their discriminating legislation directed against Indians as such, could be no party to discrimination of that character against the British friends who are present in India, or who may in future see separate I speak on behalf of the Congress also. The combination too holds the same view. the other

Therefore instead of this I would suggest on passed somewhat on these lines—a formula for which similar with pleasure and privilege of fighting General Suse I shall  
; resolution :

number of years. It may be capable of improvement, but I simply suggest this for the consideration of this Committee and especially for the consideration of European friends. "No disqualification not suffered by Indian-born citizens of the State shall be imposed upon any persons lawfully residing in or entering India merely"—I emphasize the word 'merely'—"on the ground of race, colour or religion." I think that this is an all-satisfying formula. No Government could possibly go beyond this. The implications of this are, I am sorry to say, different from the deductions that Lord Reading drew or sought to draw from last year's formula. There would be no discrimination in this formula against a single Britisher, or for that matter, against a single European as such. I propose here to draw no distinction whatever between Britishers or other Europeans or Americans or Japanese. I would not copy the model of the British Colonies or the British Dominions which have, in my humble opinion, disfigured their Statute-Books by importing legislation essentially based upon distinctions of colour and race.

India free, I would love to think, would give a different kind of lesson and set a different kind of example to the whole world. I would not wish India to live a life of complete isolation, whereby it would live in watertight compartments and allow nobody to enter her borders or to trade within her borders. But having said that, I have in my own mind many things that I would have to do in order to equalise conditions. I am afraid that for years to come India would be engaged in passing legislation in order to raise the down-trodden, the fallen, from the mire into which they have been sunk by the capitalists, by the landlords, by the so-called higher classes, and then, subsequently and scientifically, by the



British rulers. If we are to lift these people from the mire, then it would be the bounden duty of the National Government of India, in order to set its house in order, continually to give preference to these people and even free them from the burdens under which they are being crushed. And, if the landlords, zamindars, monied men and those who are to-day enjoying privileges—I do not care whether they are Europeans or Indians—if they find that they are discriminated against, I shall sympathise with them but I will not be able to help them even if I could possibly do so, because I would seek their assistance in that process, and without their assistance it would not be possible to raise these people out of the mire.

#### THE UNTOUCHABLES

Look at the condition, if you will, of the untouchables, if the law comes to their assistance and sets apart miles of territory. At the present moment they hold no land; they are absolutely living at the mercy of the so-called higher castes, and also, let me say, at the mercy of the State. They can be removed from one quarter to another without complaint and without being able to seek the assistance of law. Well, the first act of the Legislature will then be to see that, in order somewhat to equalise conditions, these people are given grants freely.

From whose pockets are these grants to come? Not from the pockets of Heaven. Heaven is not going to drop money for the sake of the State. They will naturally come from the monied classes, including the Europeans. Will they say that this is discrimination? They will be able to see that this is no discrimination against them because they are Europeans; it will be discrimination against them because they have got money and the others have got no money. It will be therefore a battle between the haves

and the have-nots : and if that is what is feared, I am afraid the National Government will not be able to come into being if all these classes hold the pistol at the heads of these dumb millions and say : You shall not have a Government of your own unless you guarantee our possessions and our rights.

I think I have given a sufficient indication of what the Congress stands for and of the implications of this formula that I have suggested. On no account will they find that there has been discrimination against them because they are English or because they are Europeans or Japanese or belong to any other race. The grounds that will be applicable to them for discrimination will be also the grounds for discrimination against Indian-born citizens.

#### ANOTHER FORMULA

I have got another formula also, hurriedly drafted, because I drafted it here as I was listening to Lord Reading and to Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru. It is in connection with existing rights :

No existing interest legitimately acquired, and not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation in general, shall be interfered with except in accordance with the law applicable to such interests.

I certainly have in mind what you find in the Congress resolution in connection with the taking over by the in-coming Government of obligations that are being to-day discharged by the British Government. Just as we claim that these obligations must be examined by an impartial tribunal before they are taken over by us, so should existing interests be subject to judicial scrutiny when necessary. There is no question therefore of repudiation, but merely of taking over under examination, under audit. We have here some of us who have made a study of the privileges and the monopolies

enjoyed by Europeans, but let it not be merely Europeans : there are Indians—I have undoubtedly several Indians in mind—who are to-day in possession of land which has been practically given away to them, not for any service rendered to the Nation but for some service rendered, I cannot even say to the Government, because I do not think that the Government has benefitted, but to some official; and if you tell me that those concessions and those privileges are not to be examined by the State, I again tell you that it will be impossible to run the machinery of Government on behalf of the 'have-nots,' on behalf of the dispossessed. Hence you will see here that there is nothing stated in connection with the Europeans. The second formula also is applicable equally to the Europeans as it is applicable to Indians, as it is applicable, say, to Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas and Sir Phiroze Sethna. If they have obtained concessions which have been obtained because they did some service to the officials of the day and got some miles of land, well, if I had the possession of the Government, I would quickly dispossess them. I would not consider them because they are Indians, and I would just as readily dispossess Sir Hubert Carr or Mr. Benthall, however admirable they are and however friendly they are to me. The law will be no respecter of persons whatsoever. I give you that assurance. After having received that assurance I am unable to go any further. So, that is really what is implied by 'legitimately acquired'—that every interest must have been taintless, it must be above suspicion like Caesar's wife and, therefore, we shall expect to examine all these things when they come under the notice of that Government.

Then you have "not being in conflict with the best interests of the nation". I have in mind certain monopolies legitimately acquired undoubtedly, but which have been brought into being in conflict with the best interests of the nation. Let me give you an illustration which will amuse you somewhat but which is on natural ground. Take this white elephant which is called New Delhi. Crores have been spent upon it. Suppose that the future Government comes to the conclusion that seeing that we have got this white elephant it ought to be turned to some use. Imagine that in Old Delhi there is a plague or cholera going on and we want hospitals for the poor people. What are we to do? Do you suppose the National Government will be able to build hospitals and so on? Nothing of the kind. We will take charge of those buildings and put these plague-stricken people in them and use them as hospitals, because I contend that those buildings are in conflict with the best interests of the nation. They do not represent the millions of India. They may be representative of the monied men who are sitting at the table; they may be representative of His Highness the Nawab Sahib of Bhopal, or of Sir Purshotamdas Thakurdas, or of Sir Phiroze Sethna, or of Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru, but they are not representative of those who lack even a place to sleep and have not even a crust of bread to eat. If the National Government comes to the conclusion that that place is unnecessary no matter what interests are concerned, they will be dispossessed and they will be dispossessed I may tell you without any compensation, because if you want this Government to pay compensation, it will have to rob Peter to pay Paul, and that would be impossible.

It is a bitter pill which has got to be swallowed if a Government, as Congress conceives it, comes into being. In order to take away something from here, I have no desire to deceive you into the belief that everything will be quite all right. I want, on behalf of the Congress, to lay all the cards on the table. I want no mental reservation of any description whatsoever; and then, if the Congress position is acceptable, nothing will please me better, but if that position is not acceptable, if to-day I feel I cannot possibly touch your hearts and cannot carry you with me, then the Congress must continue to wander and must continue the process of proselytization until you are all converted and allow the millions of India to feel that at last they have got a National Government.

#### CRIMINAL TRIALS

Up to now no one has said a word in connection with two lines which appear at the end of this resolution, namely: "It was agreed that the existing rights of the European community in India in regard to criminal trials should be maintained."

I must confess that I have not been able to study all the implications of it. For some days I have been engaged in carrying on friendly and private conversations with Sir Hubert Carr, Mr. Benthall and some friends. I was discussing this very theme with them and I asked them to tell me what these two things meant and they said it was the same thing for the other communities. I have not ascertained what that means. It means, I suppose, that the other communities also may demand their own jury. This refers to trial by jury. I am afraid I cannot possibly endorse this formula.

I cannot at all be a party to such reservations. I think that a National Government cannot possibly be

shut in by those restrictions. All the communities to-day who will be the future Indian nation, must start with goodwill, must start with mutual trust or not at all. If we are told that we cannot possibly have responsible Government that will be a state of things one can understand. But we are told there must be all these reservations and safeguards. It would not be liberty and responsible government but it would be all safeguards. Safeguards would eat away the whole of the Government. If all these safeguards are to be granted and all the talk here takes concrete shape and we are told that we are to get responsible government, it will be almost on a par with the responsible government that prisoners have in their jails. They too have complete independence immediately the cell door is locked and the jailor goes. The prisoners inside that cell about 10 ft. square or 7 ft. by 3 ft. have complete independence. I do not ask for that kind of complete independence with the jailors safeguarding comfortably their own rights.

Therefore I appeal to our European friends that they should withdraw this idea of safeguarding their rights. I venture to suggest that the two formulæ that I have put forward should be adopted. You may cut them about in any manner you like. If the wording is not satisfactory by all means suggest some other wording. But outside these formulæ of a negative character, whereby there is no bar sinister placed against you, I venture to say, you may not—shall I say 'dare not'—ask for more. So much with reference to existing interests and future trade.

#### KEY INDUSTRIES

I propose to associate myself entirely with the sentiments that Mr. Jayakar expressed while speaking about

key industries. The Congress conception is that if the key industries are not taken over by the State itself, the State will at least have a predominant say in the conduct and administration and development of the key industries.

A poor undeveloped country like India is not to be judged as a highly developed individualist Island like Great Britain may be. What is good for Great Britain to-day is, in my opinion, in many respects poison for India. India has got to develop her own economics, her own policy, her own method of dealing with her industries and everything else. Therefore so far as the key industries are concerned, I am afraid that not merely the Britishers but many will feel that they are not having fair play. But I do not know what is the meaning of "fair play" against a State.

#### COASTAL SHIPPING

And then about Coastal Shipping, the Congress undoubtedly has the greatest sympathy with the desire to develop that trade; but if in the Bill about the coastal trade there is any discrimination against Europeans as such, I will join hands with the Europeans and fight that Bill or the proposal which discriminates against Englishmen because they are Englishmen. But there are those vast interests that have come into being. I have travelled fairly frequently up the great river ways of Bengal and I have travelled years ago up the Irrawaddy. I know something of that trade. By concessions, privileges, favours, whatever you call them, these huge corporations have built up industries, built up companies, and built up a trade which does not admit of any opposition whatsoever.

Some of you may have heard of a budding company between Chittagong and Rangoon. The Directors of that Company, poor struggling Mussulmans, came to me in

Rangoon and asked me if I could do anything. My whole heart went out to them but there was nothing to be done. What could be done? There is the mighty British India Steam Navigation Company simply underselling this budding company and practically taking the passengers without any passage money at all. I could quote instance after instance of that character. It is not because it is a British company. If it were an Indian company that had usurped this thing, it would be the same. Supposing an Indian company was taking away capital, as to-day we have Indians who, instead of investing their capital in India, invest their capital or invest their monies outside India. Imagine that there was a huge Indian Corporation that was taking away all its profits and investing them in some other parts of the world, fearing that the National Government was not going along a correct policy and, therefore, in order to keep their money intact, they were taking away that money outside. Go a little 'step further with me and say that these Indian Directors in order to organise in a most scientific and finished and perfect manner brought all the European skill that they could bring there and did not allow these struggling corporations to come into being, I would certainly have something to say and have legislation in order to protect the companies like the Chittagong Company.

Some friends could not even float their ships along the Irrawaddy. They gave me chapter and verse in order to assure me that it became utterly impossible; they could not get their licenses, they could not get the ordinary facilities that one is entitled to. Every one of us knows what money can buy, what prestige can buy, and when such prestige is built up which kills all the saplings, to use the expression of Sir John Gorst,



it then becomes necessary to lop off the tall poppies. Tall poppies ought not to be allowed to crush these saplings. That is really the case on behalf of the coastal trade. The Bill may have been clumsily worded. That does not matter, but I think the essence of it is absolutely correct.

The definition of a citizen is a terrific job. I could not possibly undertake on the spur of the moment to present, as I understand the Congress mentality of to-day, what will commend itself to the Congress or what will commend itself to me. It is, as I say, a matter on which I would like to confer with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other friends and try to understand what is at the back of their minds, because I must confess that out of this discussion I have not been able to reach the heart of the thing. I have made the Congress position absolutely clear that we do not want any racial discrimination, but after having cleared that position I am not called upon now to give a summary decision for the opinion of the Congress in connection with the definition of the word "citizen". Therefore I would simply say in connection with the word "citizen" that I reserve my opinion as to the definition entirely for the time being.

Having said this, I want to close with this remark. I do not despair of finding a common formula that would satisfy the European friends. The negotiations in which I was privileged to be a party are, I think, still to continue. If my presence is required I will still attend that little committee meeting. The idea is to enlarge it and give it a little less informal shape and find out a common basis.

I would again hark back to the point that, so far as I can understand it, I cannot think of any detailed scheme which could be incorporated in the Constitution. What can be incorporated in the Constitution is some such formula as this, round which all kinds of rights can arise.

#### LEGAL REMEDY

There is no conception here, as you see, of doing anything administratively. I have expressed my own hope in connection with the Federal and Supreme Court. To me the Federal Court is the Supreme Court; it is the final Court of Appeal beyond which there would be no appeal whatsoever; it is my Privy Council and it is the palladium of liberty. It is the court to which every person who is at all aggrieved can go. A great Jurist in the Transvaal—and the Transvaal and South Africa generally have undoubtedly produced very great Jurists—once said to me in regard to a very difficult case: "Though there may be no hope just now, I tell you that I have guided myself by one thing, or else I should not be a lawyer: the law teaches us lawyers that there is absolutely no wrong for which there is no remedy to be found in a court of law, and if judges say there is no remedy, then those judges should be immediately unseated." I say that with all deference to you, Lord Chancellor.

I therefore think that our European friends may rest assured that the future Federal Court will not send them away empty-handed as we expect to go away empty-handed, if we do not have the favour of the Ministers, who are the present advisers of His Majesty. I am still hoping that we shall have their ear and get round their better side and then we may hope to

go away with something substantial in our pockets; but whether we go away with anything substantial in our pockets or not, I hope that if the Federal Court of my dreams comes into being, then the Europeans and everybody—all the Minorities—may rest assured that that Court will not fail them, though a puny individual like myself may fail them.\*

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\* A discussion followed this speech :

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru : Does Mahatma Gandhi propose that the National Government of the future should examine and investigate the title to property of every one, and if so, would it be any title acquired within a certain period of time or not? What is the machinery he proposes to bring into existence for the examination of that title and does he propose to give any compensation at all, or that the National Government should simply expropriate property which, according to his view, or the view of the majority, seemed to have been wrongly acquired?

Gandhiji : So far as I understand, it is not intended that the administration should do the thing; everything that is done will be above board. It will be done by legal machinery.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru : What is that legal machinery to be?

Gandhiji : I have not at the present moment thought of any limitation. I think that there is no limitation running against a wrong.

Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru : Under your National Government therefore no title in India is safe?

Gandhiji : Under our National Government the court will decide these things and if there is any undue fear about these things, I think it is possible to satisfy every legitimate doubt. I have no hesitation in saying that generally speaking this is a formula which should be accepted. Where complaints are made that there are legitimate rights acquired, it should be open to the courts of law to examine these rights. I am not going to say to-day in taking over the Government that I shall examine no rights whatsoever, no titles that have been acquired.

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## FINANCE

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Speaking at the Federal Structure Committee on November 25, 1931, Mr. Gandhi explained the Congress position on Financial Safeguards:

My Lord,—I followed your (Lord Reading's) speech on the very important subject of Financial safeguards with the greatest attention and with all the respect that is undoubtedly your due. In connection with that speech I read the paragraphs on Finance in the Federal Structure Committee's Report of last year. I think they are paragraphs 18, 19 and 20, and I regret to have to record my opinion that I cannot endorse the restrictions that have been suggested in these paragraphs. My position and, I think, the position of all of us, must be very difficult when we do not know exactly what are the financial burdens.

### SCRUTINY OF OBLIGATIONS

Let me explain. I would naturally have to consider the thing from one point of view if 'Army' was a reserved subject, and another point of view if 'Army' was a transferred subject. I have also very great difficulty in expressing my view by reason of the fact that the Congress is emphatically of opinion that the obligations to be taken over by the in-coming Government should be subject to audit and impartial examination.

I have in my hands a Report prepared by four impartial men, two of them ex-Advocates-General of the Bombay High Court: I mean Messrs. Bahadurji and Bhulabhai Desai. The third examiner, or member-

of the Committee is Professor Shah, for a long time professor in the University of Bombay, a man having an all-India reputation and author of valuable works on Indian economics. The fourth member of the Committee is Mr. Kumarappa, who holds European degrees and whose opinions on Finance command considerable acceptance and influence. These four gentlemen have submitted an elaborate Report in which they, as I hold, make out a conclusive case for an impartial enquiry, and they show that many of the obligations do not really belong to India.

In this connection I want very respectfully to say that the Congress has never suggested, as it has been viciously suggested against it, that one single farthing of national obligations should ever be repudiated by the Congress. What the Congress has however suggested is, that some of the obligations which are supposed to belong to India, ought not to be saddled upon India and should be taken over by Great Britain. You will find in these volumes a critical examination of all these obligations. I do not propose to weary this Committee with a recital of these things. Those who would care to study these two volumes may, and I have no doubt will, study them with considerable profit and they will perhaps discover that some of these obligations should never have been saddled upon India. That being the case, I feel that if one knew exactly where one was, it would be possible to give a decisive opinion, but subject to that, I venture to suggest that the restrictions, or the so-called safeguards, that have been suggested in paragraphs 18, 19 and 20 of this Report of the Federal Structure Sub-Committee will, instead of helping India on her course, hinder her progress at every step.

## INDIA'S INTERESTS

You, my Lord, were pleased to say that the question before you was not one of want of confidence in Indian Ministers. On the contrary you had every hope that the Indian Ministers would do as well as any other Minister, but you were concerned with the credit of India outside the borders of India, that the investors who supplied capital to India and who brought their money to India at reasonable rates of interest would not be satisfied if there were not safeguards of the type suggested here; and you went on further, if I remember rightly, to say that when there were any investments in India from here, or when there were any monies sent to India, it was not to be supposed that they were not also for the interest of India.

If I remember rightly, Your Lordship used the words "obviously it was in the interests of India". I was really waiting to find some illustrations, but no doubt you took it for granted that we would know those matters or those illustrations which you had in mind. I had really converse illustrations in mind while you were speaking, and I said to myself, I have within my own experience several illustrations where I could show that the interests of India were not in those particular illustrations identical with the interests of Great Britain, that the two were in conflict, and that therefore we could not possibly say that every time there were loans from Great Britain, they were in the interest of India.

Take, for instance, so many wars. Take the wars of Afghanistan. As a young man I read with great avidity the history of wars in Afghanistan written by the late Sir John Kay, and I have a vivid recollection left on my mind that most of these wars were certainly not in the

interests of India : and not only that, but that the Governor-General had bungled over these wars. The late Dadabhai Naoroji taught us, young men, that the history of British Finance in India was a history of muddle and bungling where it was not also one of exploitation of India.

#### EXCHANGE RATIO

The Lord Chancellor uttered the warning, and you were pleased to endorse his warning, that Finance, at the present moment, was a very delicate matter and that, therefore, those of us who took part in the discussion should be cautious and careful so as not to mishandle the subject and create difficulties or add to the difficulties that already face the Finance Minister in India. I, therefore, do not propose to go into any details; but I cannot help saying one thing in connection with this increase in the ratio. I mean when the rupee was appreciated to 1s. 6d. from 1s. 4d. Now there the measure was adopted in the face of almost unanimous opposition from Indians—Indians who were not in any way connected with the Congress. They were all independent, some of them great experts in finance who knew exactly what they were saying. Here again one finds that the Indian interest was really subordinated to foreign interests. It does not require an expert to know that a depreciated rupee is always, or as a rule, would be in the interest of the cultivators. I was very much struck by an admission made by two financiers here that if the rupee, instead of being linked to sterling, had been left to itself, at least for the time being it would have been of great advantage to the cultivators. They were going to the last extreme and thinking of some catastrophe that might befall India if the rupee left to itself went down to the intrinsic value, namely, 6d. or 7d. Personally I have not even then been able to

see that really the Indian cultivator would be in any shape or form damaged.

That being the case I cannot possibly endorse safeguards that would interfere with the full discharge of his responsibility by the Indian Finance Minister, and that responsibility conceived predominantly in the interests of the ryots.

#### RESOURCES

But I want to draw the attention of this Committee to one thing more. In spite of the caution uttered by the Lord Chancellor and you, my Lord, I feel somehow or other that if Indian Finance was properly managed entirely in the interests of India, we should not be subject to fluctuations as seriously as we are to-day in the foreign market, the fluctuations in London. I want to give you my reason for it. When I first became acquainted with the writing of Sir Daniel Hamilton, I approached him with considerable diffidence and hesitation. I knew nothing practically of Indian finance, I was absolutely new to the subject, but he with his zeal insisted upon my studying the papers that he continued to send me. As we all know he has large interests in India, he has himself held offices of importance and is himself an able financier. He is to-day making experiments himself along the lines he has suggested, but this is the one striking thought that he has placed before all who would care to understand his mode of looking at Indian finance when he says that India does not need to look to the gold standard or to the silver standard or to any metallic standard, India has metal all its own, and he says that that consists in her innumerable countless million of labours. It is true that the British Government has not declared itself insolvent in connection with Indian Finance, that it has been up to now able to



pay the way ; but at what cost ? It has been at the cost of the cultivator, the money has been squeezed from the cultivator. Instead of thinking in terms of rupees, if the authorities had consulted and thought of finance in terms of these masses, they could have managed the affairs of India infinitely better than they have hitherto done, they would not have been obliged to fall back upon foreign market. Everybody recognises, and British financiers have told us, that for nine years out of ten India has always a favourable balance.

That is to say, whenever India has, what may be called, an eight anna or ten anna year, eight annas is really enough to give her a favourable balance. Then India produces through bountiful Nature, from Mother Earth, more than enough to pay for all her obligations, and more than for all the imports that she may ever require. If it is true, and I hold that it is true, a country like India does not really need to fall back upon the foreign capitalist. She has been made to fall back upon the foreign capitalist because of the enormous drain that has taken place from India in order to pay what are called the 'home-charges', in order to pay the terrific charges for India's Defence. She is utterly unable to discharge these obligations, and yet, they have been met by a revenue policy which has been condemned in unmeasured terms by one of the officiating Commissioners, the late Romesh Chander Dutt. I know he engaged in a controversy with the late Lord Curzon on this very topic, and we Indians came to the conclusion that the right was on the side of the late Romesh Chander Dutt.

But I want to go a step further. It is known that these millions of cultivators remain idle for six months in the year. If the British Government saw to it that these

men would not remain idle for six months in the year, imagine the wealth that they would produce. Why should we then need ever to fall back upon the foreign market? That is how the whole idea of finance appears before me, a layman, a man who continually thinks of these masses and wants to feel as they would feel. They would say we have all the labour, therefore we do not want to fall back upon any foreign capital. So long as we labour, the whole world would want the products of our labour. And it is true, the world to-day wants the products of our labour. We would be able to produce those things that the world would voluntarily and willingly take from us. That has been the condition of India of ages past. There, I really do not share the fear that you, my Lord, have expressed in connection with Indian finance. In my opinion, unless we have control over our own door-keepers and over our own purse absolutely unrestricted, we shall not be able to shoulder the responsibility, and it will not be a responsibility worth the name.

#### NATURE OF SAFEGUARDS AND GUARANTEES

I am not in a position at the present moment to suggest any safeguards at all—not until I know that the nation is to have complete responsibility, complete control over her Army, over the Civil Service, that the nation will be at perfect liberty to take over so many of the civilians as the nation would want, so many of the soldiers as the nation would want and on terms that would be suitable for a poor nation like India. Unless I know all these things it is practically impossible for me to suggest the safeguards. As a matter of fact, when all these things are taken into consideration, probably, there will be no necessity for any safeguards, unless one starts with a want of confidence in India's ability to shoulder her burden and India's ability

to carry on the administration of the country in a peaceful manner. The only danger under such circumstances that I can possibly conceive would be that the moment we take charge there would be utter chaos and disorder. Now, if that is the fear that seizes the British mind, then, there is no meeting ground. We take responsibility, we ask for responsibility, we demand responsibility because, we have got that confidence that we would be able to carry on our affairs in a decent manner and, I feel, certainly in a much better manner than British administrators have done or could ever do—not because they are not able. I will grant that they are much abler than we are; I will grant that they have got an organising capacity which we have to learn at their feet. But we have one thing. We know our country, we know our people and we should, therefore, be able to run our Government cheaply. We would avoid all the quarrels, and we, not having any imperialistic ambition, would not go to war with the Afghans or any other nation, but we would cultivate friendly relations, and they would have nothing to fear from us.

That is the kind of ideal that runs through my mind as I conceive Indian Finance. You will see, therefore, that in my opinion Indian Finance does not occupy such a large place in my conception, and not such a dangerous position as it evidently occupies in your mind, or the Lord Chancellor's mind or in the minds of British Ministers with whom I had the privilege of discussing this question. Hence, and for the reasons that I have explained, I must respectfully say that it is not possible for me to subscribe to the safeguards that are suggested here, or to endorse the fears that agitate the British public or the responsible men in Great Britain.

For every obligation that the National Government undertakes there will be proper guarantees, such guarantees as a nation can possibly give, and assurances of a right type forthcoming. But in my opinion, they will never be of the type or the character described in these paragraphs. After all, if there are, and there would be I have no doubt certain obligations that we would have to take over and we would have to discharge towards Great Britain, supposing that we bungled and did not do anything whatsoever, no assurance given on paper would be worth anything. Or supposing that India, when she comes into her own, unfortunately for her, has a series of bad seasons, then again, I do not know that any safeguard that might possibly be conceived would be enough to squeeze money out of India. In these critical circumstances—unforeseen circumstances—visitations of Nature, it is impossible for any National Government to give guarantees.

I can only close with the great sorrow that has overtaken me in connection with these things that I should find myself in conflict with so many administrators who have experience of Indian affairs and also of so many of my countrymen who are attending this Round Table Conference; but, if I am to discharge my duty as representative of the Congress, even at the risk of incurring displeasure, I must give expression to the views I hold in common with so many members of the Congress.\*

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\* At the conclusion of the speech Lord Reading remarked :

I do not think that you quite accurately represented what I had said. It may be a misinterpretation of some observations that were made. All I want to say is that I have already given in the speeches that I have made with regard to finance but I did not want it to be assumed that there is no answer to it.

Gandhiji: Of course not.

## PROVINCIAL AUTONOMY

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The following is the full text of Mr. Gandhi's speech in the Federal Structure Committee on November 25, 1931 :

I tender my congratulations to Professor Lees-Smith for being responsible for this debate, and I tender my congratulations to you, my Lord Chancellor, for having allowed this debate. I think that Professor Lees-Smith has shown amazing optimism in initiating this debate. He has come as a physician with an oxygen cylinder and he is trying to pump oxygen into a dying body. I do not say that we are a dying body because of this rumour or threat of provincial autonomy divorced from central responsibility. In my own humble manner, almost from the commencement of these proceedings, I have been uttering words of warning and I said so in so many words that I was oppressed with a sense of unreality which has been dawning upon Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru for the last few days ; I happen to know this because he has given me the privilege of taking me into his confidence in common with his other friends and comrades, if I can also bracket myself as one of his comrades.

Out of his ripe experience of administrative affairs, having held high offices in the Government, he has warned us of the danger of Provincial Autonomy so called. I am very often an unrepentant sinner. He had reasons for issuing this warning especially in connection with me, because I had dared to discuss the question of Provincial Autonomy with so many English friends who are responsible public men in this country, and he had heard of it, and so he gave me ample warning. It was for that

reason that you find me as one of the co-signatories, not to the document that has been placed before you, my Lord Chancellor, but another similar document that was issued to the Press about ten days ago and was addressed to the Prime Minister. I told him, as I say here, that both he and the others who have spoken after him, and I, reached the same goal though through different routes. "Fools walk in where Angels fear to tread." Not having had any experience of administration actually, I felt that if the Provincial Autonomy was the Provincial Autonomy of my conception I, for one, would not mind handling the fruit, feeling the thing and seeing whether it really answered my purpose. I love to meet friends who may be opponents in policy on their own platform and find out their difficulties and find out also whether what they are offering is likely to lead one to the same place, and in that spirit and in that sense I ventured to discuss Provincial Autonomy, but I found at once on discussion that what they meant was certainly not the Provincial Autonomy that I meant, and so I told my friends also that I would be quite safe if they left me alone, that I was not going to sell the interests of the country out of a foolish conception of Provincial Autonomy, or out of impatience to get something for the country. What I am anxious to do is, having come all these miles with the greatest diffidence, having come here to tender my whole-hearted co-operation to the Government and to this Conference without the slightest mental reservation, and having applied that spirit of co-operation in thought, word and deed, to leave nothing undone, I have not hesitated even to go into the danger zone and hence I have dared to talk about and discuss Provincial Autonomy. But I have come to the conclusion that you, or the British

Ministers, do not contemplate giving India that measure of Provincial Autonomy which would satisfy a man of my mentality, which would satisfy the Congress, and which would reconcile the Congress to taking up Provincial Autonomy, although there may be delay in getting responsibility at the Centre.

#### A CURE FOR TERRORISM

Let me make my meaning clear, because, here too, I am adopting a somewhat different line of argument, and I am most anxious not to be misunderstood. Let me take, therefore, one illustration. I want to take for my illustration Bengal, because it is one of the Provinces to-day in India which is deeply affected. I know that there is a terrorist school active in Bengal. Everybody ought to realise by this time that I can have no manner of sympathy with that terrorist school in any shape or form. I am as convinced as I have ever been that terrorism is the worst kind of action that any reformer can take up. Terrorism is the very worst thing for India in a special manner, because India is a foreign soil for terrorism to flourish in. I am convinced that those young Indians who are giving their lives for what they consider to be a good cause are simply throwing away their lives, and that they are not bringing the country one inch nearer the goal, which is common, I hope, to us all.

I am convinced of all these things, but, having been convinced of them, supposing that Bengal had Provincial Autonomy to-day, what would Bengal do? Bengal would set free every one of the detenus, an Autonomous Bengal would not hunt down the terrorists, but would try to reach them and convert them. I should

approach them with every confidence and wipe out terrorism from Bengal.

But let me go a little step further in order to drive home the truth that is in me. If Bengal was autonomous, that autonomy itself would really remove terrorism from Bengal, because these terrorists foolishly consider that their action is the shortest cut to freedom; but having attained that freedom, the terrorism would cease.

To-day there are a thousand young men, some of whom, I would dare swear, have absolutely nothing in common with the school of terrorism, a thousand young men who have not been tried and who have not been convicted; they have all, every one of them, been arrested on suspicion. So far as Chittagong is concerned, Mr. Sen Gupta, who was Lord Mayor of Calcutta, who was a member of the Bengal Legislative Council, and who was also President of the Provincial Congress Committee in Bengal, is here to-day. He has brought to me a report signed by members of all the parties in Bengal in connection with Chittagong and it is sad reading. It is painful to read this report, but the substance of this report is, that there has been an inferior edition of the Black and Tans in Chittagong, and Chittagong is not a place of no importance on the map of India.

We now see there has been a flag-showing ceremony, and in making this demonstration all the Military forces have been concentrated together in Calcutta, and these demonstrations have gone through ten streets of Calcutta.

At whose expense, and what will it do? Will it frighten the terrorists? I promise you it will not. Will it then wean the Congress from Civil Disobedience?



It will not do so. The Congress people are pledged to this thing. Suffering is the badge of their tribe. They have determined to go through every form of suffering. It cannot therefore frighten them. Our children would laugh at this show, and it is our purpose to show the children that they must not be terrified, they must not be frightened by this display of artillery, guns, air force and so on.

#### OF THE RIGHT KIND

So that you see what is my conception of Provincial Autonomy. All these things would be impossible; I would not allow a single soldier to enter the Province of Bengal; I would not pay a single farthing for the upkeep of an Army which I may not command. In such a Provincial Autonomy you do not contemplate a state in Bengal whereby I can set free all these detenus and remove from the statute-book the Bengal Regulations. If it is Provincial Autonomy, then it is independence for Bengal precisely in the same manner as the responsible Government I have seen growing up in Natal. That is a little colony, but it had its own independent existence; it had its own volunteer force and so on. You do not contemplate that thing for Bengal or any of these Provinces. It will be the Centre still dictating, still ruling, still doing all these things. That is not the Provincial Autonomy of my conception. That was why I said if you present me with that live Provincial Autonomy, I shall be prepared to consider that proposition; but I am also convinced that that autonomy is not coming. If that autonomy was coming we would not see all these protracted proceedings that have taken place here; then we would have managed our own affairs in an entirely different manner.

But what really grieves me still more is this : we have all been brought here with one single purpose. I have been brought here specially through that very pact in which it is written in so many words that I was coming here to discuss and to receive really responsibility at the Centre : Federation with all its responsibility—safeguards undoubtedly—but safeguards in the interests of India. I have said in season and out of season that I would consider every safeguard that is necessary. I personally do not really agree with Professor Lees-Smith or anybody else that constitution-building should take all these long years—three years. He thinks of Provincial Autonomy in eighteen months. My folly tells me that all this time is not necessary. Where the people have made up their mind, the Parliament has made up its mind, the Ministers have made up their minds and the public opinion here, then these things do not take time. I have seen them not taking time where there has been one mind applied ; but I do know that there is not one mind applied but there are many minds, all following their own course and all perhaps with a disruptive tendency. That being so, I feel convinced that, in spite of this debate, not only is there going to be no responsibility at the Centre, but there is going to be no tangible result out of this Conference. It hurts me, it pains me, that all this precious time of British Ministers, of the Nation and of all these Indians who have come here, should have been wasted ; but I am very much afraid that, in spite of this oxygen cylinder the result will be *nil*. I do not say that the result is therefore bound to be that Provincial Autonomy will be thrust down our throats.

## EFFECT OF REPRESSION

I do not really fear that result. What I fear is something still more dreadful—that nothing at all is going to come out of this thing but terrible repression in India. I do not mind that repression; repression will only do us good. If we have repression in the right time, I will consider that also as a very fine outcome of this Conference. Repression has never done harm to a single Nation which is sailing for her destined goal with a fixed determination, for that repression is really an oxygen draught, though not the draught that Professor Lees-Smith has administered.

But what I fear is that the slender thread which I had again built up of co-operation with the British people and with British Ministers is about to snap and that I should again declare myself a convinced non-co-operator and civil resister—that I should redeliver this message of non-co-operation and civil resistance to the millions of India, no matter how many air balloons will float over India or how many tanks will be brought to India. They will have no result. You do not know to-day that they produce no results even upon the tender young children. We teach them to dance with joy when bullets are flying about them like so many crackers. We teach them to suffer for the freedom of their country. I do not despair. I do not think that because nothing happens here there will be chaos in the land; not so long as Congress remains untarnished and non-violence goes forward throughout the length and breadth of India undiminished. I have been told so often that it is the Congress that is responsible for this terrorism. I take this opportunity of denying that with all the strength at my command. On the

contrary, I have evidence to show that it is the Congress creed of non-violence which up to now has kept the forces of terrorism in check. I regret we have not succeeded to the fullest extent, but as time goes on we hope to succeed. It is not as if this terrorism can bring freedom to India. I want freedom precisely of the same type, only fuller than what Mr. Jayakar wants. I want full freedom for the masses and I know that terrorism can do no good to the masses. The masses are silent and disarmed. They do not know how to kill. I do not talk of individual instances but the masses of India have never moved in that direction.

#### REAL RESPONSIBILITY

Wanting that freedom for the masses I know that this terrorism can do no good whatsoever. Whilst on the one hand Congress will fight British authority and its terrorism legalised, so also will Congress fight terrorism, illegal, on the part of youth. Between those two there was this course of co-operation opened up for the British nation and for me by Lord Irwin. He had built this bridge and I thought I was going to have a safe passage. I had a safe passage. I have come here to tender my co-operation. But I must confess to you that apart even from what Professor Lees-Smith has said, and apart from what has been said on this side also, by Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and by Mr. Sastri and the other speakers, the limited responsibility at the Centre, which they have in view, would not satisfy me.

I want that responsibility at the Centre that will give me, as you all know, control of the Army and Finance. I know I am not going to get that here now, and I know there is not a British man ready for that, and therefore I know I must go back and yet invite the nation to a

course of suffering. I have taken part in this debate because I wanted to make my position absolutely clear. What I have been saying to friends in private sitting-rooms with reference to Provincial Autonomy I have now said openly at this table, and I have told you what I mean by Provincial Autonomy and what would really satisfy me. I close by saying that I sail in the same boat as Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and others, and I feel convinced that real Provincial Autonomy is an impossibility unless there is responsibility at the Centre, or unless you are prepared to so weaken the Centre that the provinces will be able to dictate to the Centre. I know that you are not prepared to-day to do this. I know that this Conference does not conceive a weak Centre but strong one when this Federal Government is brought into being.

A strong Centre governed and administered by an alien authority, and a strong autonomy, are a contradiction in terms. Hence I feel that Provincial Autonomy and Central Responsibility have, really speaking, to go together. But I say again that I have an open mind. If somebody will convince me that there is Provincial Autonomy, such as I have conceived for instance for Bengal, available, I would grasp it.

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## CONCLUDING SPEECH

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"I shall strain every nerve to secure an honourable settlement without exposing the millions of India's men, women and children to the terrible ordeal of Civil Disobedience. But if it has got to be faced I shall do it with joy," said Mahatma Gandhi in his speech at the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference on November 30, 1931. The following is the full text of the speech :

I do not think that anything that I can say this evening can possibly influence the decision of the Cabinet. Probably the decision has been already taken. Matters of liberty of practically a whole Continent can hardly be decided by mere argumentation, or even negotiation. Negotiation has its purpose and has its play, but only under certain conditions. Without those conditions negotiations are a fruitless task. But I do not want to go into all these matters. I want as far as possible to confine myself within the four corners of the conditions that you, Prime Minister, read to this Conference at its opening meeting.

### RULE OF MAJORITY

I would, therefore, first of all say a few words in connection with the Reports that have been submitted to this Conference. You will find in these Reports that generally it has been stated that so and so is the opinion of a large majority, some, however, have expressed an opinion to the contrary, and so on. Parties who have dissented have not been stated. I had heard when I was in India, and I was told when I came here, that no decision or decisions will be taken by the ordinary rule of majority, and I do not want to mention this fact

here by way of complaint that the Reports have been so framed as if the proceedings were governed by the test of majority.

But it was necessary for me to mention this fact, because to most of these reports you will find that there is a dissenting opinion, and in most of the cases that dissent unfortunately happens to belong to me. It was not a matter of joy to have to dissent from fellow-delegates. But I felt that I could not truly represent the Congress unless I notified that dissent.

There is another thing which I want to bring to the notice of this Conference, namely, what is the meaning of the dissent of the Congress? I said at one of the preliminary meetings of the Federal Structure Committee that the Congress claimed to represent over 85 per cent. of the population of India, that is to say the dumb, toiling, semi-starved millions. But I went further: that the Congress claimed also, by right of service, to represent even the Princes, if they would pardon my putting forth that claim, and the landed gentry, and the educated class. I wish to repeat that claim and I wish this evening to emphasize that claim.

#### CONGRESS REPRESENTS INDIA

All the other parties at this meeting represent sectional interests. Congress alone claims to represent the whole of India and all interests. It is no communal organisation; it is a determined enemy of communalism in any shape or form. Congress knows no distinction of race, colour or creed; its platform is universal. It may not always have lived up to the creed. I do not know a single human organisation that lives up to its creed. Congress has failed very often to my knowledge. It may have failed more often to the knowledge of its critics. But the worst

critic will have to recognise, as it has been recognised, that the Indian National Congress is a daily growing organisation, that its message penetrates the remotest village of India, that on given occasions the Congress has been able to demonstrate its influence over and among these masses who inhabit its 700,000 villages.

And yet, here I see that the Congress is treated as one of the Parties. I do not mind it; I do not regard it a calamity for the Congress; but I do regard it as a calamity for the purpose of doing the work for which we have gathered together here. I wish I could convince all the British public men, the British Ministers, that the Congress is capable of delivering the goods. The Congress is the only all-India wide national organisation, bereft of any communal bias: that it does represent all Minorities which have lodged their claim here and which, or the signatories on their behalf, claim—I hold unjustifiably—to represent 46 per cent. of the population of India. The Congress, I say, claims to represent all these Minorities.

What a great difference it would be to-day if this claim on behalf of the Congress was recognised. I feel that I have to state this claim with some degree of emphasis on behalf of peace, for the sake of achieving the purpose which is common to all of us, to you Englishmen who sit at this Table, and to us the Indian men and women who also sit at this Table. I say so for this reason: Congress is a powerful organisation; Congress is an organisation which has been accused of running or desiring to run a parallel Government; and in a way I have endorsed the charge. If you could understand the working of the Congress, you would welcome an organisation which could run a parallel Government and show that it is possible for an organisation, voluntary, without any force



at its command, to run the machinery of Government even under adverse circumstances.

But no. Although you have invited the Congress you distrust the Congress. Although you have invited the Congress, you reject its claim to represent the whole of India. Of course it is possible at this end of the World to dispute that claim, and it is not possible for me to prove this claim; but, all the same, if you find me asserting that claim, I do so because a tremendous responsibility rests upon my shoulders.

#### THE WAY OF NEGOTIATION

The Congress represents the spirit of rebellion. I know that the word "rebellion" must not be whispered at a Conference which has been summoned in order to arrive at an agreed solution of India's troubles through negotiation. Speaker after speaker has got up and said that India should achieve her liberty through negotiation, by argument, and that it will be the greatest glory of Great Britain if Great Britain yields to India's demands by argument. But this Congress does not hold quite that view. The Congress has an alternative which is unpleasant to you.

#### THE OLD WAY

I heard several speakers—I have tried to follow every speaker with the utmost attention and with all the respect that I could possibly give to these speakers—saying what a dire calamity it would be if India was fired with the spirit of lawlessness, rebellion, terrorism and so on. I do not pretend to have read history, but as a schoolboy I had to pass a paper in history also, and I read that the page of history is soiled red with the blood of those who have fought for freedom. I do not know an instance in which nations have attained their own without having to go

through an incredible measure of travail. The dagger of the assassin, the poison howl, the bullet of the rifleman, the spear and all these weapons and methods of destruction have been up to now used by, what I consider, blind lovers of liberty and freedom. And the historian has not condemned him. I hold no brief for the terrorists. Mr. Ghuznavi brought in the terrorists and he brought in the Calcutta Corporation. I felt hurt when he mentioned an incident that took place at the Calcutta Corporation. He forgot to mention that the Mayor of that Corporation made handsome reparation for the error into which he himself was betrayed, and the error into which the Calcutta Corporation was betrayed through the instrumentality of those members of the Corporation who were Congressmen.

I hold no brief for Congressmen who directly or indirectly would encourage terrorism. As soon as this incident was brought to the notice of the Congress, the Congress set about putting it in order. It immediately called upon the Mayor of the Calcutta Corporation to give an account of what was done and the Mayor, the gentleman that he is, immediately admitted his mistake and made all the reparation that it was then legally possible to make. I must not detain this Assembly over this incident for any length of time. He mentioned also a verse which the children of the forty schools conducted by the Calcutta Corporation are supposed to have recited. There were many other mis-statements in that speech which I could dwell upon, but I have no desire to do so. It is only out of regard for the great Calcutta Corporation, and out of regard for truth, and on behalf of those who are not here to-night to put in their defence, that I mention these two glaring instances. I do not for one moment believe that this was taught in the Calcutta Corporation

schools with the knowledge of the Calcutta Corporation. I do know that in those terrible days of last year, several things were done for which we have regret, for which we have made reparation.

If our boys in Calcutta were taught those verses which Mr. Ghuznavi has recited, I am here to tender an apology on their behalf, but I should want it proved that the boys were taught by the school-masters of these schools with the knowledge and encouragement of the Corporation. Charges of this nature have been brought against Congress times without number, and times without number these charges have also been refuted, but I have mentioned these things at this juncture. It is again to show that for the sake of liberty people have fought, people have lost their lives, people have killed and have sought death at the hands of those whom they have sought to oust.

#### THE NEW WAY

The Congress then comes upon the scene and devises a new method not known to history, namely, that of civil disobedience, and the Congress has been following up that method. But again, I am up against a stone wall and I am told that that is a method that no Government in the world will tolerate. Well, of course, the Government may not tolerate, no Government has tolerated open rebellion. No Government may tolerate civil disobedience, but Governments have to succumb even to these forces, as the British Government has done before now, even as the Great Dutch Government after eight years of trial had to yield to the logic of facts. General Smuts, a brave General, a great statesman, and a very hard taskmaster also, but he himself recoiled with horror from even the contemplation

of doing to death innocent men and women who were merely fighting for the preservation of their self-respect. Things which he had vowed he would never yield in the year 1908, reinforced as he was by General Botha, he had to do in year 1914, after having tried these civil resisters through and through. And in India, Lord Chelmsford had to do the same thing: the Governor of Bombay had to do the same thing in Borsad and Bardoli. I suggest to you, Prime Minister, it is too late to-day to resist this, and it is this thing which weighs me down, this choice that lies before them, the parting of the ways probably. I shall hope against hope, I shall strain every nerve to achieve an honourable settlement for my country, if I can do so without having to put the millions of my countrymen and countrywomen and even children through this ordeal of fire. It can be a matter of no joy and comfort to me to lead them again to a fight of that character, but, if a further ordeal of fire has to be our lot, I shall approach that with the greatest joy and with the greatest consolation that I was doing what I felt to be right, the country was doing what it felt to be right, and the country will have the additional satisfaction of knowing that it was not at least taking lives, it was giving lives: it was not making the British people directly suffer, it was suffering. Professor Gilbert Murray told me—I shall never forget that I am paraphrasing his inimitable language—"Do you not consider for one moment that we Englishmen do not suffer when thousands of your countrymen suffer, that we are so heartless?" I do not think so. I do know that you will suffer; but I want you to suffer because I want to touch your hearts; and when your hearts have been touched, then will come the

psychological moment for negotiation. Negotiation there always will be ; and if this time I have travelled all these miles in order to enter upon negotiation, I thought that your countryman, Lord Irwin, had sufficiently tried us through his ordinances, that he had sufficient evidence that thousands of men and women of India and thousands of children had suffered ; and that, ordinance or no ordinance, *lathis* or no *lathis*, nothing would avail to stem the tide that was onrushing and to stem the passions that were rising in the breasts of the men and women of India who were thirsting for liberty.

#### THE PRICE

Whilst there is yet a little sand left in the glass, I want you to understand what this Congress stands for. My life is at your disposal. The lives of all the members of the Working Committee, the All-India Congress Committee, are at your disposal. But remember that you have at your disposal the lives of all these dumb millions. I do not want to sacrifice those lives if I can possibly help it. Therefore, please remember, that I will count no sacrifice too great if, by chance, I can pull through an honourable settlement. You will find me always having the greatest spirit of compromise if I can but fire you with the spirit that is working in the Congress, namely, that India must have real liberty. Call it by any name you like ; a rose will smell as sweet by any other name, but it must be the rose of liberty that I want and not the artificial product. If your mind and the Congress mind, the mind of this Conference and the mind of the British people, means the same thing by the same word, then you will find the amplest room for compromise, and you will find the Congress itself always in a compromising spirit.

But so long as there is not that one mind, that one definition, not one implication for the same word that you and I and we may be using so long there is no compromise possible. How can there be any compromise so long as we each one of us has a different definition for the same words that we may be using. It is impossible, Prime Minister, I want to suggest to you in all humility that it is utterly impossible then to find a meeting ground, to find a ground where you can apply the spirit of compromise. And I am very grieved to have to say up to now I have not been able to discover a common definition for the terms that we have been exchanging during all these weary weeks.

#### OUR GOAL

I was shown last week the Statute of Westminster by a sceptic, and he said: "Have you seen the definition of Dominion?" I read the definition of "Dominion" and naturally I was not at all perplexed or shocked to see that the word "Dominion" was exhaustively defined and it had not a general definition but a particular definition. It simply said: the word "Dominion" shall include Australia, South Africa, Canada and so on ending with the Irish Free State. I do not think I noticed Egypt there. Then he said: "Do you see what your Dominion means?" It did not make any impression upon me. I do not mind what my Dominion means or what complete independence means. In a way I was relieved.

I said: 'I am now relieved from having to quarrel about the word "dominion"; because I am out of it.' But I want complete independence, and even so, so many Englishmen have said: "Yes, you can have complete independence, but what is the meaning of

complete independence?" and again we come to different definitions.

One of your great statesmen was debating with me, and said: "Honestly I did not know that you meant this by complete independence." He ought to have known but he did not know, and I shall tell you what he did not know. When I said to him: "I cannot be a partner in an Empire," he said: "Of course, that is logical." I replied: "But I want to become that. It is not as if I shall be if I am compelled to, but I want to become a partner with Great Britain. I want to become a partner with the English people; but I want to enjoy precisely the same liberty that your people enjoy, and I want to seek this partnership not merely for the benefit of India, and not merely for mutual benefit; I want to seek this partnership in order that the great weight that is crushing the world to atoms may be lifted from its shoulders."

This took place ten or twelve days ago. Strange as it may appear, I got a note from another Englishman, whom also you know, and whom also you respect. Among many things, he writes: "I believe profoundly that the peace and happiness of mankind depend on our friendship"; and as if I would not understand that, he says: "Your people and mine." I must read to you what he also says: "And of all Indians you are the one that the real Englishman likes and understands."

He does not waste any words on flattery, and I do not think he has intended this last expression to flatter me. It will not flatter me in the slightest degree. There are many things in this note which, if I could share them with you, would perhaps make you

understand better the significance of this expression, but let me tell you that when he writes this last sentence, he does not mean me personally. I personally signify nothing and I know I would mean nothing to any single Englishman; but I mean something to some Englishmen because I represent a cause, because I seek to represent a nation, a great organisation which has made itself felt. That is the reason why he says this.

But then, if I could possibly find that working basis, Prime Minister, there is ample room for compromise. It is friendship I crave. My business is not to throw overboard the slave-holder and tyrant. My philosophy forbids me to do so, and to-day the Congress has accepted that philosophy, not as a creed, as it is to me, but as a policy, because the Congress believes that it is the right and the best thing for India, a nation of 350,000,000 to do.

#### OUR WEAPON

A nation of 350 million people does not need the dagger of the assassin, it does not need the poison bowl, it does not need the sword, the spear or the bullet. It needs simply a will of its own, an ability to say 'no', and that nation is to-day learning to say 'no'.

But what is it that that nation does? To summarily, or at all, dismiss Englishmen? No. Its mission is to-day to convert Englishmen. I do not want to break the bond between England and India, but I do want to transform that band. I want to transform that slavery into complete freedom for my country. Call it complete independence or whatever you like, I will not quarrel about that word, and even though my countrymen may dispute with me for having taken some other word, I shall be able to bear down that opposition so long as the content of the word that you may suggest to me bears the



same meaning. Hence, I have times without number to urge upon your attention that the safeguards that have been suggested are completely unsatisfactory. They are not in the interests of India.

#### FINANCIAL CRAMP

Three experts from the Federation of Commerce and Industry have, in their own way, each in his different manner, told out of their expert experiences how utterly impossible it is for any body of responsible Ministers to tackle the problem of administration when 30 per cent. of her resources are mortgaged irretrievably. Better than I could have shown to you they have shown out of the amplitude of their knowledge what these financial safeguards mean for India. They mean the complete cramping of India. They have discussed at this table financial safeguards but that includes necessarily the question of Defence and the question of the Army. Yet while I say that the safeguards are unsatisfactory as they have been presented I have not hesitated to say, and I do not hesitate to repeat that the Congress is pledged to giving safeguards, endorsing safeguards which may be demonstrated to be in the interests of India.

At one of the sittings of the Federal Structure Committee, I had no hesitation in amplifying the admission and saying that those safeguards must be also of benefit to Great Britain. I do not want safeguards which are merely beneficial to India and prejudicial to the real interests of Great Britain. The fancied interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The fancied interests of Great Britain will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of India will have to be sacrificed. The illegitimate interests of Great Britain will also have to be sacrificed.

Therefore, again I repeat, if we have the same meaning for the same word I will agree with Mr. Jayakar, with Sir Tej Bahadur Sapru and other distinguished speakers who have spoken at this Conference.

I will agree with them all that we have, after all these labours, reached a substantial measure of agreement, but my despair, my grief, is that I do not read the same words in the same light. The implications of the safeguards of Mr. Jayakar, I very much fear, are different from my implications, and the implications of Mr. Jayakar and myself are perhaps only different from the implications that Sir Samuel Hoare, for instance, has in mind ; I do not know. We have never got down to brass tacks, as you put it, and I am anxious—I have been pining—to come to real grips and to get down to brass tacks all these days and all these nights, and I have felt: why are we not coming nearer and nearer together, and why are we wasting our time in eloquence, in oratory, in debating, and in scoring points? Heaven knows, I have no desire to hear my own voice. Heaven knows I have no desire to take part in any debating. I know that liberty is made of sterner stuff, and I know that the freedom of India is made of much sterner stuff. We have problems that would baffle any statesman. We have problems that other nations have not to tackle. But they do not baffle me; they cannot baffle those who have been brought up in the Indian climate. Those problems are there with us. Just as we have to tackle our bubonic plague, we have to tackle the problem of malaria. We have to tackle, as you have not, the problem of snakes and scorpions, monkeys, tigers and lions. We have to tackle these problems because we have been brought up under them.

They do not baffle us. Somehow or other we have survived the ravages of these venomous reptiles and various creatures. So also shall we survive our problem and find a way out of those problems. But to-day you and we have come together at a Round Table and we want to find a common formula which will work. Please believe me that whilst I abate not a little of the claim that I have registered on behalf of the Congress, which I do not propose to repeat here, while I withdraw not one word of the speeches that I had to make at the Federal Structure Committee, I am here to compromise; I am here to consider every formula that British ingenuity can prepare, every formula that the ingenuity of such Constitutionalists as Mr. Sastri, Dr. Tej Bahadur Sapru, Mr. Jayakar, Mr. Jinnah, Sir Muhammad Shafi and a host of others can weave into being.

#### MUTUAL TRUST

I will not be baffled. I shall be here as long as I am required because I do not want to revive civil disobedience. I want to turn the truce that was arrived at Delhi into a permanent settlement. But for heaven's sake give me, a frail man 62 years gone, a little bit of a chance. Find a little corner for him and the organisation that he represents. You distrust that organisation though you may seemingly trust me. Do not for one moment differentiate me from the organisation of which I am but a drop in the ocean. I am no greater than the organisation to which I belong. I am infinitely smaller than that organisation; and if you find me a place, if you trust me, I invite you to trust the Congress also. Your trust in me otherwise is a broken reed. I have no authority save what I derived from the Congress. If you will work the Congress for all it is worth, then.

you will say goodbye to terrorism; then you will not need terrorism. To-day you have to fight the school of terrorists which is there with your disciplined and organised terrorism, because you will be blind to the facts or the writing on the wall. Will you not see the writing that these terrorists are writing with their blood? Will you not see that we do not want bread made of wheat, but we want bread of liberty; and without that liberty there are thousands to-day who are sworn not to give themselves peace or to give the country peace.

I urge you then to read that writing on the wall. I ask you not to try the patience of a people known to be proverbially patient. We speak of the mild Hindu, and the Mussulman also by contact good or evil with the Hindu has himself become mild. And that mention of the Mussulman brings me to the baffling problem of Minorities. Believe me, that problem exists here, and I repeat what I used to say in India—I have not forgotten those words—that without the problem of Minorities being solved there is no *Swaraj* for India, there is no freedom for India. I know that I realise it; and yet I came here in the hope 'perchance' that I might be able to pull through a solution here. But I do not despair of some day or other finding a real and living solution in connection with the Minorities problem. I repeat what I have said elsewhere that so long as the wedge in the shape of foreign rule divides community from community and class from class, there will be no real living solution, there will be no living friendship between these communities.

It will be after all and at best a paper solution. But immediately you withdraw that wedge, the domestic ties, the domestic affections, the knowledge of common

birth—do you suppose that all these will count for nothing?

Were Hindus and Mussulmans and Sikhs always at war with one another when there was no British rule, when there was no English face seen there? We have chapter and verse given to us by Hindu historians and by Mussulman historians to say that we were living in comparative peace even then. And Hindus and Mussulmans in the village are not even to-day quarrelling. In those days they were not known to quarrel at all. The late Maulana Muhammad Ali often used to tell me, and he was himself a bit of an historian. He said: "If God"—"Allah" as he called God—"gives me life, I propose to write the history of Mussulman rule in India; and then I will show, through documents that British people have preserved, that Aurangzeb was not so vile as he has been painted by the British historian; that the Mogul rule was not so bad as it has been shown to us in British history; and so on." And so have Hindu historians written. This quarrel is not old; this quarrel is coeval with this acute shame. I dare to say, it is coeval with the British advent, and immediately this relationship, the unfortunate, artificial, unnatural relationship between Great Britain and India is transformed into a natural relationship, when it becomes, if it does become, a voluntary partnership to be given up, to be dissolved at the will of either party, when it becomes that you will find that Hindus, Mussulmans, Sikhs, Europeans, Anglo-Indians, Christians, untouchables, will all live together as one man.

I do not intend to say much to-night about the Princes, but I should be wronging them and should

be wronging the Congress if I did not register my claim, not with the Round Table Conference but with the Princes. It is open to the Princes to give their terms on which they will join the Federation. I have appealed to them to make the path easy for those who inhabit the other part of India, and therefore, I can only make these suggestions for their favourable consideration, for their earnest consideration. I think that if they accepted, no matter what they are, but some fundamental rights as the common property of all India, and if they accepted that position and allowed those rights to be tested by the Court, which will be again of their own creation, and if they introduced elements—only elements—of representation on behalf of their subjects, I think that they would have gone a long way to conciliate their subjects. They would have gone a long way to show to the World and to show to the whole of India that they are also fired with a democratic spirit, that they do not want to remain undiluted autocrats, but that they want to become constitutional monarchs even as King George of Great Britain is.

#### AN AUTONOMOUS FRONTIER PROVINCE

Let India get what she is entitled to and what she can really take, but whatever she gets, and whenever she gets it, let the Frontier Province get complete autonomy to-day. That Frontier will then be a standing demonstration to the whole of India, and therefore, the whole vote of the Congress will be given in favour of the Frontier Province getting Provincial Autonomy to-morrow. Prime Minister, if you can possibly get your Cabinet to endorse the proposition that from to-morrow the Frontier Province becomes a

full-fledged autonomous province, I shall then have a proper footing amongst the Frontier tribes and convene them to my assistance when those over the border cast an evil eye on India.

#### THANKS

Last of all, my last is a pleasant task for me. This is perhaps the last time that I shall be sitting with you at negotiations. It is not that I want that. I want to sit at the same table with you in your closets and to negotiate and to plead with you and to go down on bended knees before I take the final leap and final plunge.

But, whether I have the good fortune to continue to tender my co-operation or not does not depend upon me. It largely depends upon you. But it may not even depend upon you. It depends upon so many circumstances over which neither you nor we may have any control whatsoever. Then, let me perform this pleasant task of giving my thanks to all from Their Majesties down to the poorest men in the East End where I have taken up my habitation.

In that settlement, which represents the poor people of the East End of London, I have become one of them. They have accepted me as a member, and as a favoured member of their family. It will be one of the richest treasures that I shall carry with me. Here, too, I have found nothing but courtesy and nothing but a genuine affection from all with whom I have come in touch. I have come in touch with so many Englishmen. It has been a priceless privilege to me. They have listened to what must have often appeared to them to be unpleasant, although it was true. Although I have often been obliged to say these things to them,

they have never shown the slightest impatience or irritation. It is impossible for me to forget these things. No matter what befalls me, no matter what the fortunes may be of this Round Table Conference, one thing I shall certainly carry with me that is, that from high to low I have found nothing but the utmost courtesy and the utmost affection. I consider that it was well worth my paying this visit to England in order to find this human affection.

It has enchanced, it has deepened my irrepressible faith in human nature, that although Englishmen and Englishwomen have been fed upon lies so often that I see disfiguring your Press, that although in Lancashire the Lancashire people had perhaps some reason for becoming irritated against me, I found no irritation and no resentment even in the operatives. The operatives, men and women, hugged me. They treated me as one of their own. I shall never forget that.

I am carrying with me thousands upon thousands of English friendships. I do not know them but I read that affection in their eyes as early in the morning I walk through your streets. All this hospitality, all this kindness will never be effaced from my memory, no matter what befalls my unhappy land. I thank you for your forbearance.



## *AU REVOIR*

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At the close of the Round Table Conference, Mr. Gandhi, who was asked to propose the vote of thanks to the Chair, made the following observation :

Prime Minister, and Friends,—The privilege and the responsibility of moving a vote of thanks to the Chair have been entrusted to me, and I have taken up the responsibility and the privilege with the greatest pleasure. A Chairman who conducts the proceedings of his meeting in a becoming and courteous manner, is always entitled to a vote of thanks, whether those who compose the meeting agree with the decisions taken at the meeting, or with the decisions that may be given by the Chairman himself.

Sir, I know that yours was a double duty. You had not only to conduct the proceedings of the Conference with becoming dignity and with impartiality, but you had often to convey the decisions of His Majesty's Government.

And your final act in the Chair has been to convey the considered decision of His Majesty's Government over the many matters on which this Conference has deliberated. I propose to omit that part of your task ; but for me the pleasanter part is how you have conducted the proceedings, and let me congratulate you upon the lesson that you have given us so often in time sense. Chairmen often neglect that very elementary duty, and I must confess, in my country almost with tiresome regularity. We are not

credited with proper time sense. Prime Minister, it will be my pleasant and bounden duty to give to my countrymen when I return to India what the British Prime Minister has done in the matter of time sense.

The other thing that you have shown us is your amazing industry. Brought up in your hardy Scotch climate, you have not known what rest is, and you have not allowed us also to know what rest is. With, shall I say, almost unexampled ferocity you worked every one of us, including old men like my friend and revered brother Pandit Madan Mohan Malaviya, and an equally old man like me.

You have worked almost to exhaustion, with a pitilessness worthy of a Scotsman like you, my friend and revered leader Sastri. You let us know yesterday that you know his physical condition, but before a sense of duty you set aside all these personal considerations. All honour to you for that and I shall treasure this amazing industry of yours.

But let me say on this matter that although I belong to a climate which is considered to be luxuriant, almost bordering on the equatorial regions, perhaps we might there be able to cross swords with you in industry; but that does not matter. If what you gave us yesterday is only a foretaste of what you are capable of—working even for a full twenty-four hours as your House of Commons has done at times—well then, of course, you will take the palm.

#### AT THE PARTING OF THE WAYS

Therefore I have the greatest pleasure in moving this vote of thanks. But there is an additional reason, and it is perhaps a greater reason why I should shoulder this responsibility and esteem the

privilege that has been given to me. It is somewhat likely—I would say only somewhat likely, because I would like to study your declaration, once, twice, thrice, as often as it may be necessary, scanning every word of it, reading its hidden meaning if there is a hidden meaning in it, crossing all the T's, dotting all the I's and if I then come to the conclusion as just now seems to be likely—that so far as I am concerned we have come to the parting of the ways.

That our ways take different directions, it does not matter to us. You are entitled to my hearty and most sincere vote of thanks. It is not given to us in this society of ours for all to agree in order to respect one another. It is not given to us always to expect meticulous regard for each other's opinions and always to be accommodating so that there is no principle left with you. On the contrary, dignity of human nature requires that we must face the storms of life and sometimes, even blood brothers have got to go each his own way, but, if at the end of their quarrel—at the end of their differences—they can say that they bore no malice and that even so they acted as becomes a gentleman, a soldier—if it will be possible at the end of the chapter for me to say that of myself and of my countrymen, and if it is possible for me to say that of you, Prime Minister, and of your countrymen, I will say that we parted also well. I do not know in what direction my path will lie, but it does not matter to me in what direction that path lies. Even then, although I may have to go in an exactly opposite direction, you are still entitled to a vote of thanks from me from the bottom of my heart.

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## GANDHI-WILLINGDON CORRESPONDENCE

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On the conclusion of the Round Table Conference, Mahatma Gandhi sailed for India arriving in Bombay on the morning of the 28th December 1931. Writing to *Young India* on board *S. S. Pilsna* on December 23, he observed that he was "returning home not filled with disappointment but with hope enriched". Of the Round Table Conference and its results, he had nothing new to report. He had an open mind and hoped for the best. He was on arrival however confronted with a grave and menacing situation. The rule of Ordinances had already commenced in Bengal, in the United Provinces and in the North-West Frontier Province. The Frontier Reforms of December 22, 1931, were quickly followed by three Ordinances promulgated on the 24th. On the 25th Abdul Gaffar Khan, better known as the Frontier Gandhi, and a few others were arrested under Regulation III of 1818. On the 26th Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, General Secretary of the Congress, and Mr. Sherwani, a member of the Working Committee, were jailed. The situation was thus tense with excitement and uncertainty, to which Mr. Gandhi gave expression in the two speeches he delivered at Bombay, one at the Azad Maidan and the other at the Welfare of India League, and in the interviews he gave to the Press.

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## REPLY TO BOMBAY WELCOME

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Reviewing the situation as he found it on return home, Mahatma Gandhi spoke as follows at the Azad Maidan, Bombay, on the evening of December 28, 1931, when he was welcomed on behalf of the Nation by Mr. Vallabhai Patel :

Sardar Saheb, Sisters, and Brethren,—In the morning you flocked to welcome me, in token of the love you bear towards me and now also you have gathered here; and for this expression of your love I thank you from the bottom of my heart. Truth to speak all this is an expression of the love and confidence you repose in the Congress, through which you are determined to achieve the cherished desire of your hearts. It seems to me so.

Last night. I had thought of telling you things quite different from what I propose to say now. It seems to be the will of God that I have to tell you something different from what I hoped I would tell you.

It is only too true that man proposes and God disposes.

Many things I have learnt to-day, of which I was quite unaware and for which I was unprepared.

I was ignorant of the firing at Peshawar, and of the deaths of the brave men. I was also not aware that Pandit Jawaharlal and Sjt. Sherwani were under arrest and awaiting trial.

LORD WILLINGDON'S X'MAS GIFTS!

All this, I learned after my landing here. I take it that these are all Christmas Gifts from Lord Willingdon,

our Christian Viceroy. For, is it not a custom during Christmas to exchange greetings and gifts? Something had to be given me and this is what I have got.

In the Frontier Province Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan, his brother and several others have been arrested, and we do not know how many more will be jailed. We may not even get the news from that Province. What better presents can there be for a *Satyagrahi* than these?

If we had committed any offence and were punished for that, there would have been occasion for us to regret it. But I am as certain as there is life in me that Khan Abdul Gaffar is a true believer in the cult of *Satyagraha* and he has understood its meaning. I need say nothing about Pandit Jawaharlal and Sjt. Sherwani. You know them as much as I do.

The question now before us is, what is our duty. Shall we take the hint from the action of the Government and launch a campaign of *Satyagraha* or shall we try some other means? I cannot give you my opinion just at present.

I will only say that if fate wills that we should go through the ordeal again, and if the Congress Working Committee decides on the renewal of the fight, I shall not hesitate to ask you to join it. But if there is any possibility of avoiding *Satyagraha*, I shall do my utmost to prevent it and advise you to have patience. I think after years of experience India has learnt to hold herself in patience.

#### THE ORDINANCE

I was grieved to learn on board the steamer that in Bengal, two of our young girls are said to have committed a murder. It pained me as a *Satyagrahi*,

'because our creed is to be ready to die and not to kill. Our fight is based on love. Even if we fight the Government, it is with the weapon of love and there can be no room for hatred in it. When I heard of that incident, I was sorry but that does not mean that there is the least justification for what the Government has been doing in Bengal. A Government has every right to punish the wrong-doers, but it does not behove a Government to victimise people for acts for which they are not responsible. There can be no justification for the Ordinances promulgated in the U. P. or the North-West Frontier Province. We cannot tolerate any of them.

I repeat again, I had hoped that it would be possible to find a way to co-operate with the Government. I will even now do my best to find the way out. But I must admit the signs that I have noticed have considerably weakened my hopes. And if ever we have to fight, we should be prepared to do our utmost. Ours is a fight, in which one and all can join. It is a fight to court sufferings. It is a struggle to give life and not to take life. In this struggle even children can play a part.

#### NON-VIOLENCE

Last year we faced *lathis*, but this time we must be prepared to face bullets. I do not wish that the Pathans in the Frontier alone should court bullets. If bullets are to be faced, Bombay and Gujarat also must take their share. I had said in London that if we have to offer even a million lives for achieving freedom, I would be prepared for sacrifice without the least compunction. I believe that we must get rid of the fear of death, and when we have to court death we must embrace it as we embrace a friend. But inspite of our readiness

to offer our lives, we must see to it that not even a hair of an Englishman is hurt. We must hope that by our sacrifice we shall be able to bring about a change of heart in the same Englishman who strikes us.

By my visit to Europe, my faith in non-violence has immensely increased. I believe that non-violence has the power to melt the stoniest heart. Some people thought that during my visit to Europe I would learn something new, but I honestly say that I learnt nothing new except that my faith in non-violence is increased.

Another experience that I got during my visit to London was that the British Cabinet believes—and there is no reason to doubt its sincerity—that we are not fit for self-Government. They believe that although the Congressmen speak of non-violence, they do not honestly believe in it. The reason is that in the reports they get from their officials in India it is represented that Indians are unfit for self-Government, and that Congress has no control over the masses. That is why they have been declaring Congress organisations unlawful. Our duty is not to find fault with the Englishman nor to be angry with him, but to get rid of our shortcomings and to act up to the creed of non-violence. May be that many of you have accepted it as a policy, but so long as the Congress has adopted that creed, we must stick fast to it. By our actions we must prove beyond doubt that we, Congressmen exist not to harm anyone but to protect others at the cost of our own lives. Congress stands to achieve freedom by sacrificing lives. Those who do not subscribe to that view, had better leave the Congress. If we did that, we shall enhance the influence and reputation that we



have earned, and if we lose it, we will not be able to attain freedom.

If we have not so far been able to attain *Swaraj*, it does not mean that we should give up the attempt. India has not only to attain her freedom but also to give the message of peace and non-violence to the world. Even if years are required to achieve that object, it should not dishearten us.

#### SATYAGRAHA, THE WEAPON

I hear people saying that if Congress gave up *Satyagraha*, it will be able to deal with the Government. I must make it clear that Congress and *Satyagraha* are inseparable. In *Satyagraha* lies the power of the Congress and the Government will have ultimately to come to terms with the Congress. I made this clear in London and I repeat it to-day before you and the whole world. The Congress does not belong to the Hindus alone. It stands equally for Muslims, Sikhs, Parsis, Christians, Jews and in fact all those who have made India their home. Congress stands for those Englishmen also who have made India their home. I made the claim in London on behalf of the Congress that it stands for the whole of India and I repeat it here. Its influence is bound to increase.

#### COMMUNAL SOLUTION

We could not solve the communal problem in London. I knew that it could never be solved there. It can be solved by the Congress and it is doing all that it can to solve it. The remedy is to serve all classes and communities. If the Congress serves the Sikhs and Muslims, they are sure to claim the Congress as their own.

## STATUS OF UNTOUCHABLES

One word about the untouchables. I claim myself to be one of them. I have served them for my whole life. I started their service even before I took up Congress work. How can I then do anything that will harm them? The untouchables have been so much oppressed by the Caste Hindus that we can find no parallel to it in any other religion. Therefore if they get angry and do harm to 10 or 20 Hindus, it should not give us cause to retaliate. I am not prepared for any concession like reservation of seats, etc., to the untouchables, because I believe that it would be perpetrating untouchability. Let the future legislatures of free India be filled with untouchables alone but let them come in as equals. Unless we raise them to our level, our freedom will be futile. So long as a person, whether man or woman, touchable or untouchable, rich or poor, is oppressed and does not enjoy equal rights with other citizens of the country, we cannot enjoy freedom. It will be slavery in the garb of freedom. What I did in London was only to safeguard their rights.

I had a mind to speak on many things. I had to place before you an account of what I did in London in connection with the R. T. C. If I am left free, I may do it on some other occasion or you may know it through other means.

What I have to tell you now is that if there is to be a fight, be prepared for every sacrifice, but take a pledge that you will not do harm to others. I will do all that lies within the power of a human being to prevent another fiery ordeal, but if I find that there is no other way out I will not hesitate to call upon you to go through it, whatever the magnitude of sufferings may be. May God give us the strength to suffer and sacrifice in the cause of freedom. (*Loud cheers.*)

## SPEECH AT THE WELFARE OF INDIA LEAGUE

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Mr. Gandhi was the guest of honour at a meeting of the Welfare of India League at the Hotel Majestic, Bombay, on Monday the 28th December 1931. Gandhiji complained that the Officials of India were making co-operation with Government impossible by adopting drastic and severe measures under the Ordinances. For himself, he said, he was dying for co-operation. The following is the full text of Mahatmaji's speech:

My intention when I accepted this invitation was to speak to you this evening on what I saw in England. But on landing in India all my plans have been upset by the startling news that I have heard about the situation here. I wished to speak to you and to the Congress about the many things I have seen in England and in Europe. They have got their dark side as also the bright side of the picture. There were things I saw from which I had every reason for hope. But there were also things which held out no hopes at all. I would gladly have spoken to you of what I saw in England and in Europe. But now with the situation before me as it is, I shall have to speak to you largely about the events that face me and face you as those who want to promote the welfare of this country.

But I want to assure you that wherever I went in London, in England or in Europe, I was surrounded with the greatest amount of affection and I felt that there was no truth in Kipling's saying that the East and West would never meet. I am not conscious of a single experience throughout my three months' stay in England and Europe that has made me feel that after all East is East and West is West. On the

contrary I have been convinced more than ever that human nature is much the same, no matter under what clime it flourishes, that if you approached people with trust and affection you would have ten-fold trust and thousand-fold affection returned to you.

#### THE R. T. C.

Though I cannot say I have achieved anything from the R. T. C. in terms of the Congress demand, I do not consider my visit to England has been useless. On the contrary I feel that it was a good thing that I was able to go through this experience, which has further enabled me to put to test efficiency of the methods that I have been employing for the last 30 years in connection with public questions. But I must close this part of my speech about my experiences, because instead of finding an echo of this experience in India I find myself face to face with grim facts.

Whilst I could not say that the Round Table Conference or the Prime Minister's declaration has offered anything that would positively satisfy the Congress, I could say that there was an honest effort on the part of the British Ministers to understand the Indian situation although they could not appreciate the Indian view-point as I conceive it. Instead of finding an atmosphere responsive to the expectations raised by the Prime Minister's declarations, supported by the speech of the Secretary of State for India, I find that there is absolutely no atmosphere to answer even the granting of limited responsibility to India, as had been defined in the speech of the Secretary of State for India. . . . .

#### THE SECRETARY OF STATE

I am here to testify that of all the Ministers I had the privilege of meeting, I found the Secretary of State

for India to be an honest and frank-hearted Englishman. I had no difficulty in understanding what was at the back of his mind and every interview with him brought me nearer to him and we parted as the best of friends, as I did with all the other Ministers.

But when I come here I find a different order of things altogether. Here is the Frontier trouble. Side by side with the declaration that the Frontier Province is about to be placed on the same footing as the other Provinces, you find in that Province to-day an Ordinance for which I cannot find any parallel whatsoever. If you have not studied it thoroughly I commend it to you. I have not myself studied it carefully. I have gone through the brief Press reports that are available. But I cannot tell myself that this is a human piece of legislation, if at all it can be called a legislation.

#### A GREAT AND BRAVE PATHAN

The Ordinance gives no protection for the life or property. The ostensible aim of this Ordinance is to put down the activities of the brave people of the Frontier with a heavy hand. I know Khan Abdul Gaffar Khan and his band of Khudai Khidmatgars. But I do not know of anything that has been done by these "red shirts"—the Khudai Khidmatgars which means the servants of God. I know of the greatness of Abdul Gaffar Khan. He is a brave Pathan. He is a simple hearted, sincere and honest man and he walks in fear of God. Even some of the officials in the North-West Frontier have testified to his honesty. But now he has been deported with a band of his men.

And what is his crime? His crime is that he wanted independence for his Province and for India, this crime is that he did not attend the Durbar that

was held recently to consider the ways and means to give new form of government to that Province. Beyond that he had done nothing, neither have any of those thousands of followers of his done anything. Was it their crime that they were wearing the red shirts? And on top of this we have received reports that they have been shot down for defying the Ordinance. Civil disobedience should be punished because that is the essence of civil disobedience. A civil resister courts suffering and punishment. But I have not seen or heard anywhere that the penalty for defying law, apart from violence done by the civil resisters, is to meet them with bullets. We have already reports that 14 people have been killed when the troops opened fire on a crowd of red shirts and spectators. We have no report of the casualties when the troops fired on a body of 2,000 red shirts. The casualties must be severer. More is perhaps to follow.

This is certainly an exceedingly unhappy augury for changing the Frontier Province into an Autonomous Province. It is a bad augury that one of its bravest men should have been deported at this time and several men killed, because they have shown themselves to be brave in defying an Ordinance which is only legalised martial law.

#### UNITED PROVINCES

Now I come to the United Provinces. And what do I find there? Here Jawaharlal Nehru and Mr. Sherwani have been arrested. And what did they do? Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru wanted to attend a Conference that was to be held. But instead of attending it what he did was to postpone it to a later date, because of some conditions that had been imposed by the Government

which he thought were not consistent with self-respect. He postponed it pending the decisions of the Congress Working Committee which is meeting here to-morrow. He wanted to ascertain what steps should be taken after consultation with me and the Working Committee members in the light of my experience at the Round Table Conference. But the Government served an order on him that he should not leave the limits of the Allahabad Municipality without taking permission from Government authorities. He wrote a letter to the Magistrate intimating his intention to proceed to Bombay to receive me. But he and Mr. Sherwani have been arrested.

#### WILLINGDON'S 13

But the arrests do not worry me at all. But it is the Ordinance that is now in existence in the U. P. which troubles me very much. It is almost of the same type as the Frontier Ordinance. There are enough Ordinances to the credit of Lord Irwin. But there are already 13 Ordinances to Lord Willingdon's credit. These 13 Ordinances outdo all Lord Irwin's Ordinances by their severity.

#### BENGAL

Now I pass on to Bengal. I might be told in Bengal you cannot possibly complain about the Ordinance because crime has been committed there. Some Bengal youths have run amok and committed assassination. I have always been shocked to hear of murderous violence. But I am more pained now that I hear that even girls have taken to these deeds of terrorism. But because a few persons ran amok how can the whole Province be emasculated? The effect of it will be to wean away even the sympathisers of the Government as such

an Ordinance as prevails there interferes with everyday life of the people of that province. I have discussed this Ordinance with many public men in England and there was nothing but condemnation for the same.

This in brief is the picture of the situation I find myself face to face with. This does not appear to leave any choice for me.

But at the same time I have pledged myself to so many British friends that I would try my level best, in spite of the disappointment at the Round Table Conference so far as the Congress demand is concerned, to continue co-operation with the Government. But from what I have seen since I landed, I must confess to you that I see very little hope for tendering any co-operation unless I lose all my sense of self-respect.

I would be doing the greatest injustice to myself and to the Nation if I advised co-operation now, unless I could see some light dawn on the horizon which just now seems to me impenetrable darkness.

I do not know how you, the members of the Welfare of India League view these Ordinances. But I assure you that I shall strain every nerve to see if I would not tender co-operation on honourable lines to induce Government to withdraw or revise these Ordinances.

#### PARALLEL GOVERNMENT

The Congress is charged with trying to run a parallel Government by the Governor of the United Provinces. I do not see what is wrong in running Parallel Governments, so long as they are run on non-violent lines and for the interest of the people. What is wrong in private organisations of individuals running hospitals? What even if they run side by side with



## LORD WILLINGDON'S REPLY

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The following reply was received at Mani Bhuvan, Bombay, from the Private Secretary to the Viceroy to the above telegram on the 31st December, 1931 :

"His Excellency desires me to thank you for your telegram of the 29th instant in which you refer to Bengal and United Provinces and the N. W. F. P. Ordinances. In regard to Bengal it has been and is necessary for Government to take all possible measures to prevent dastardly assassination of their officers and of private citizens.

His Excellency wishes me to say that he and his Government desire to have friendly relations with all political parties and with all sections of the public and in particular to securing co-operation of all in great work of constitutional reforms which they are determined to push forward with minimum delay. Co-operation however must be mutual, and His Excellency and his Government cannot reconcile activities of the Congress in the United Provinces and the N. W. F. P. with the spirit of frankly co-operation which the good of India demands.

As regards United Provinces you are doubtless aware that while the local Government were engaged in devising means to give all possible relief in the existing situation, the Provincial Congress Committee authorised a no-rent campaign which is now being vigorously pursued by Congress organisations in that Province. This action on the part of the Congress bodies has compelled Government to take measures to prevent a general state of disorder and spreading of class and communal hatred which the campaign, if continued unchecked, would inevitably involve.

In N. W. F. P., Abdul Gaffar Khan and the bodies he controlled have continuously engaged in activities against Government and in fomenting racial hatred. He and his friends have persistently refused all overtures by the Chief Commissioner to secure their co-operation and rejecting the declaration of the Prime Minister have declared in favour of complete independence.

Abdul Gaffar Khan has delivered numerous speeches open to no other construction than as incitement to revolution and his adherents have attempted to stir up trouble in tribal areas. The Chief Commissioner, with the approval of His Excellency's Government, has shown utmost forbearance and to the last moment continued his efforts to secure assistance of Abdul

Gaffar Khan in carrying into effect, with the least possible delay, the intentions of His Majesty's Government regarding constitutional reforms in the province. Government refrained from taking special measures until the activities of Abdul Gaffar Khan and his associates and in particular the open and intensive preparation for an early conflict with Government created a situation of such grave menace to the peace of the province and of the tribal areas as to make it impossible further to delay action.

His Excellency understands that Abdul Gaffar Khan was in August last made responsible for leading the Congress Movement in his Province and that the volunteer organisations he controlled were specially recognised by the All-India Congress Committee as Congress Organisations. His Excellency desires me to make it clear that his responsibilities for peace and order make it impossible for him to have any dealing with persons or organisations. Upon him rests the responsibility for the activities outlined above.

You have yourself been absent from India on the business of the Round Table Conference and in the light of the attitude which you have observed there.

His Excellency is unwilling to believe that you have personally any share in the responsibility for or that you approve of the recent activities of the Congress in the United Provinces and in the N. W. F. P. If this is so, he is willing to see you and to give you his views as to the way in which you can best exert your influence to maintain the spirit of co-operation which animated the proceedings of the Round Table Conference. But His Excellency feels bound to emphasize that he will not be prepared to discuss with you measures which Government of India, with the full approval of His Majesty's Government, have found it necessary to adopt in Bengal, the United Provinces and the N. W. F. P.

The measures must in any case be kept in force until they have served the purpose for which they were imposed, namely, preservation of law and order essential to good government. On receipt of your reply, His Excellency proposes to publish this correspondence."

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## THE MAHATMA'S REJOINDER

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The following is Mahatmajī's rejoinder (31st December 1931) to the Viceroy's reply :

I thank His Excellency for the wire in reply to mine of 29th instant. It grieves me, for His Excellency has rejected in a manner hardly befitting his high position an advance made in friendliest spirit. I had approached as a seeker wanting light on questions upon which I desire to understand the Government version of very serious and extraordinary measures to which I made reference. Instead of appreciating my advance, His Excellency has rejected it by asking me to repudiate my valued colleagues in advance and telling me that even if I became guilty of such dishonourable conduct and sought interview, I could not even discuss these matters of vital importance to the Nation.

In my opinion the constitutional issue dwindles into insignificance in the face of the ordinances and acts which must, if not met with stubborn resistance, end in utter demoralisation of the Nation. I hope no self-respecting Indian will run the risk of killing national spirit for a doubtful contingency of securing a constitution to work which no Nation with stamina may be left. Let me also point out that as to the Frontier Province your telegram contains a narration of facts which on the face of them furnish no warrant for arrests of popular leaders passing extra-legal Ordinance making life and property utterly insecure and shooting unarmed peaceful crowds for daring to demonstrate against the arrests of their trusted leaders.

If Khan Sahab Abdul Gaffar asserted the right to complete independence, it was a natural claim and a claim made with impunity by the Congress at Lahore in 1929 and by me with energy put before the British Government in London. Moreover, let me remind the Viceroy that despite the knowledge on the Government's part that the Congress mandate contained such a claim, I was invited to attend the London Conference as the Congress delegate. Nor am I able to detect in a mere refusal to attend a Durbar an offence warranting summary imprisonment. In refusing to attend a Darbar if Khan Sahab was fomenting racial hatred, it was undoubtedly regrettable. I have his own declarations to the contrary made to me, but assuming that he did foment racial hatred, he was entitled to an open trial where he could have defended himself against the accusation.

Regarding the United Provinces, His Excellency is surely misinformed because there was no no-rent campaign authorised by the Congress. But whilst negotiations were proceeding between Government and Congress representatives, the time for collection of rents actually arrived and rents began to be demanded. Congressmen were therefore obliged to advise tenants to suspend payment pending the result of negotiations, and Mr. Sherwani had offered on behalf of the Congress to withdraw this advice if the authorities, on their initiative suspended collections pending negotiations. I venture to suggest that this is not a matter which can be so summarily dismissed as your wire has done. The controversy in the United Provinces is of long standing and involves the well-being of millions of peasantry known to be economically ground down.

Any Government jealous of the welfare of the masses in its charges would welcome voluntary co-operation

of a big body like the Congress, which admittedly exercises great influence over the masses and whose one ambition is to serve them faithfully and let me add that I regard the withholding of payment of taxes as an inalienable ancient and natural right of a people who have exhausted all other means of seeking freedom from an unbearable economic burden.

I must repudiate the suggestion that the Congress has the slightest desire to promote disorder in any shape or form. As to Bengal, the Congress is at one with the Government in condemning assassinations and should heartily co-operate with Government in measures that may be found necessary to stamp out such crimes. But whilst the Congress would condemn in unmeasured terms methods of terrorism, it can in no way associate itself with Government terrorism as is betrayed by the Bengal Ordinance and the acts done thereunder, but must resist within the limits of its prescribed creed of non-violence such measures of legalised Government terrorism. I heartily assent to the proposition laid down in your telegram that co-operation must be mutual. But your telegram leads me irresistibly to the conclusion that His Excellency demands co-operation from the Congress without returning any on behalf of Government.

I can read in no other way his peremptory refusal to discuss these matters which, as I have endeavoured to show, have at least two sides. The popular side I have put as I understand it, but before committing myself to a definite judgment I was anxious to understand the other, that is, the Government side and then tender my advice to the Congress. With reference to the last para of your telegram I may not repudiate moral liability for the actions of my colleagues whether in the Frontier Province or United Provinces, but I confess that I was ignorant

of the detailed actions and activities of my colleagues whilst I was absent from India and it was because it was necessary for me to advise and guide the Working Committee of the Congress and in order to complete my knowledge I sought with an open mind and with the best of intentions an interview with His Excellency and deliberately asked for his guidance.

I cannot conceal from His Excellency my opinion that the reply he has condescended to send was hardly a return for my friendly and well-meant approach. And if it is not yet too late, I would ask His Excellency to reconsider his decision and see me as a friend without imposing any conditions whatsoever as to the scope or subject of discussion, and I on my part can promise that I would study with an open mind all the facts that he might put before me. I would unhesitatingly and willingly go to the respective provinces and with the aid of the authorities study both sides of the question and if I came to the conclusion after such a study that the people were in the wrong and that the Working Committee including myself were misled as to the correct position and that the Government was right, I should have no hesitation whatsoever in making that open confession and guiding the Congress accordingly.

Along with my desire and willingness to co-operate with the Government, I must place my limitations before His Excellency. Non-violence is my absolute creed. I believe that civil disobedience is not only the natural right of a people, especially when they have no effective voice in their own Government but that it also is an effective substitute for violence or armed rebellion.

I can never therefore deny my creed. In pursuance thereof, and on the strength of uncontradicted reports

supported by the recent activities of the Government of India to the effect that there may be no other opportunity for me to guide the public, the Working Committee has accepted my advice and passed a resolution tentatively sketching a plan of civil disobedience. I am sending herewith the text of the resolution.\* If His Excellency thinks it worth while to see me, the operation of the resolution will be suspended pending our discussion in the hope that it may result in the resolution being finally given up. I admit that the correspondence between His Excellency and myself is of such grave importance as not to brook delay in publication. I am, therefore, sending my telegram, your reply, this rejoinder and the Working Committee's resolution for publication.

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\* The following is the text of the Resolution of the Working Committee adopted at Bombay on the 28th December 1931 :

#### RESOLUTION OF THE WORKING COMMITTEE

The Working Committee has heard Mahatma Gandhi's account of his visit to the West and considered the situation created by the extraordinary Ordinances promulgated in Bengal, United Provinces, and the Frontier Province, and by the actions of the authorities, including the numerous arrests made, among these of Khan Abdul Ghaflar Khan, Mr. Sherwani and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, and by the shooting in the Frontier Province of innocent men, resulting in many deaths and many more being injured. The Working Committee has also seen the telegram from His Excellency the Viceroy in reply to the telegram sent by Mahatma Gandhi to him.

#### CO-OPERATION MADE IMPOSSIBLE

The Working Committee is of opinion that these several acts, and others of lesser gravity that have taken place in some other Provinces, and the telegram from His Excellency seem to make further co-operation with the Government on the part of the Congress utterly impossible unless the Government policy is radically changed ; these acts and the telegram betray no intention on the part of bureaucracy to hand power to the people and are calculated to demoralize the nation. They also betray want of faith in the Congress from which co-operation is expected by the Government.

## THE VICEROY'S REPLY

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The following is the text of the Viceroy's reply of January 2, 1932, to Mr. Gandhi's last telegram conveying to His Excellency at Calcutta the resolution passed by the Congress Working Committee at Bombay:

"Your telegram of January 1, has been considered by His Excellency the Viceroy and his Government. They much regret to observe that under your advice the Congress Working Committee has passed a resolution which involves the general revival of civil disobedience in India unless certain conditions are satisfied which are stated in your telegram and the resolution. His Excellency and his Government regard the attitude as the more deplorable in view of the declared intentions of His Majesty's Government and the Government of India to expedite the policy of constitutional reform contained in the Premier's statement.

No Government consistent with the discharge of its responsibility can be subject to any conditions sought to be imposed under the menace of unlawful action by any political organisation, nor can the Government of India accept the position implied in your telegram that its policy should be dependent on the judgment of yourself as to necessity of the measures which the Government has taken after the most careful and thorough consideration of the Fact and after all other possible remedies had been exhausted.

His Excellency and the Government can hardly believe that you or the Working Committee contemplate that His Excellency can invite you with the hope of any advantage to an interview held under the threat of the resumption of civil disobedience. His Excellency and his Government must hold you and the Congress responsible for all the consequences which may ensue for the action which the Congress have announced their intention of taking and to meet which the Government will take all necessary measures."

The Working Committee yields to no one in its abhorrence of terrorism, on any account whatsoever, resorted to by individuals such as was recently witnessed in Bengal, but it condemns with equal force terrorism practised by Government as evidenced by its recent acts and ordinances.

The Working Committee marks the deep national humiliation over the assassination committed by two girls in Comilla, and is firmly convinced that such crime does great harm to the nation, especially when, through its greatest political mouthpiece of the Congress, it is pledged to non-violence for achieving *Swaraj*.



## MR. GANDHI'S REJOINDER

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Mr. Gandhi then sent the following telegram to the Private Secretary to His Excellency the Viceroy on the 2nd January 1932:

"Thanks for your wire of even date. I cannot help expressing deep regret for the decision of His Excellency and his Government. Surely it is wrong to describe an honest expression of opinion as a threat. May I remind the Government that the Delhi negotiations were opened and carried on whilst civil disobedience was on and that when the pact was made, civil disobedience was not given up but only discontinued. This position was reasserted and accepted by His Excellency and his Government in Simla in September last prior to my departure for London. Although I had made it clear that under certain circumstances the Congress might have to resume civil disobedience, the Government did not break off negotiations.

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### BENGAL ORDINANCE NOT JUSTIFIED

But the Working Committee can see no justification whatsoever for the Bengal Ordinance which seek to punish a whole people for the crime of a few. The real remedy lies in dealing with the known cause that prompts such crime.

If Bengal Ordinance has no justification for its existence, the Ordinances in the United Provinces and the Frontier Province have still less.

### U. P. GOVERNMENT ACTION NOT COVERED BY ORDINANCE

The Working Committee is of opinion that the measures taken by the Congress in the United Provinces for obtaining agrarian relief are and can be shown to be justified. The Working Committee holds that it is the unquestionable right of all people suffering from grave economic distress, as the tenantry of the United Provinces is admittedly suffering, to withhold payment of rent if they fail, as in the United Provinces they have failed, to obtain redress by other constitutional methods. In the arrest and imprisonment of Mr. Sherwani, the President of the United Provinces Congress Committee, and Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru, the

That it was made clear by the Government that civil disobedience carried with it the penalty for disobedience merely proves what civil resisters bargain for but does not in any way affect my argument. Had the Government resented that attitude, it was open to them not to send me to London. On the contrary my departure had His Excellency's blessings.

Nor is it fair or correct to suggest that I have ever advanced the claim that any policy of the Government should be dependent on my judgment. But I do submit that any popular and constitutional Government would always welcome and sympathetically consider suggestions made by public bodies and their representatives and assist

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Working General Secretary of the Congress, who were proceeding to Bombay to confer with Mahatma Gandhi and to take part in the meeting of the Working Committee, the Government have even gone beyond the limits contemplated by their Ordinance in that there was no question whatsoever of these gentlemen taking part at Bombay in a no-tax campaign in the United Provinces.

#### GOVERNMENT'S INHUMAN ACTS IN NORTH-WEST FRONTIER PROVINCE

So far as the Frontier Province is concerned, on the Government's own showing there appears to be no warrant for either the promulgation of the Ordinance or the arrest and imprisonment without trial of Khan Abdul Ghaffar Khan and his co-workers. The Working Committee regards the shootings in that province of innocent and unarmed men to be wanton and inhuman and congratulates the brave men of the Frontier upon their courage and endurance, and the Working Committee has no doubt that, if the brave people of the Frontier retain their non-violent spirit in spite of the gravest provocations, their blood and their sufferings would advance the cause of India's independence.

#### IMPARTIAL PUBLIC INQUIRY ASKED FOR

The Working Committee calls upon the Government of India to institute a public and impartial inquiry into the events that have led up to the passing of these Ordinances, the necessity of superseding the ordinary courts of law and legislative machinery, and the necessity of the several acts committed thereunder and thereafter. If a proper inquiry is set up and all facilities are given to the Working Committee for the production of evidence, it will be prepared to assist the inquiry by leading evidence before it.

them with all available information about their acts or ordinances of which public opinion may disapprove. I claim that my messages have no other meaning. Time alone will show whose position was justified.

Meanwhile I wish to assure the Government that every endeavour will be made on the part of the Congress to carry on the struggle without malice and in a strictly non-violent manner. It was hardly necessary to remind me that the Congress and I, its humble representative, are responsible for all the consequences of our actions.

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#### PRIME MINISTER'S DECLARATIONS UNSATISFACTORY

The Working Committee has considered the declaration of the Prime Minister made before the Round Table Conference and the debate in the Houses of Parliament and regards it as wholly unsatisfactory and inadequate in terms of the Congress demand and places on record its opinion that nothing short of complete Independence, carrying full control over defence and external affairs and finance, with such safeguards as may be demonstrably necessary in the interests of the nation, can be regarded by the Congress as satisfactory.

The Working Committee notes that the British Government was not prepared at the Round Table to regard the Congress as the only political organization representing and entitled to speak and act on behalf of the nation as a whole without distinction of caste, creed, or colour. At the same time the Committee recognizes with sorrow that the communal harmony could not be attained at the said Conference.

#### AN INVITATION TO THE NATION

The Working Committee invites the nation, therefore, to make ceaseless effort to demonstrate the capacity of the Congress to represent the nation as a whole and promote atmosphere that would make a constitution framed on a purely national basis acceptable to the various communities composing the nation.

Meanwhile the Working Committee is prepared to render co-operation to the Government provided His Excellency the Viceroy reconsiders his telegram, and adequate relief is granted in respect of the ordinances and the acts, free scope is left to the Congress in any future negotiations and consultations to prosecute the Congress claim for complete Independence, and the administration of the country is carried on in consultation with popular representatives pending the attainment of such Independence.

## MESSAGE TO THE NATION

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Mr. Gandhi gave the following message to the Nation on the 3rd January 1932:

It is a matter for deep regret to me to have received this telegram from H. E. the Viceroy and the Government. I cannot help saying that it has heaped error upon error, instead of courageously acknowledging the first error, in practically banging the door in my face by imposing, for the coveted interview, conditions which no self-respecting man can possibly accept and reopen the door. The telegram has added another error by deliberately and finally shutting the door by telling me that he cannot see me under threat of resumption of civil disobedience.

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The absence of any satisfactory response from the Government in terms of the foregoing paragraph, the Working Committee will regard as an indication on the part of the Government that it has reduced to nullity the Delhi Pact.

### RULES FOR THE CAMPAIGN

In the event of a satisfactory response not forthcoming, the Working Committee calls upon the nation to resume civil disobedience, including non-payment of taxes, under the following conditions and illustrative heads:

1. No province or district or *Tahsil* or village is bound to take up civil disobedience unless the people thereof understand the non-violent nature of the struggle with all its implications and are ready to undergo sufferings involving loss of life and property.

2. Non-violence must be observed in thought, word and deed in the face of gravest provocation, it being understood that the campaign is not one of seeking revenge or inflicting injuries on the oppressor, but it is one of converting him through self-suffering and self-purification.

3. Social boycott with the intention of inflicting injury to the Government officers, Police, or anti-nationalists can never be undertaken and is wholly inconsistent with the spirit of non-violence.

and introducing in the telegram an argument that is not germane to my repeated request for an interview. The Viceroy and his Government have committed a flagrant breach of the Delhi Pact by using the so-called threat of resumption of civil disobedience as an excuse for refusing to see me.

Surely, he must know that the negotiations which resulted in the settlement were being carried on although civil disobedience was still on, and under the Settlement it was never finally given up but was only discontinued for the purpose of securing representation of the Congress at the Round Table Conference, it being understood that it was likely to be resumed if the Round Table Conference failed to

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4. It should be borne in mind that non-violent campaigns are independent of pecuniary assistance. Therefore there should be no hired volunteers, but their bare maintenance and maintenance of the dependents of poor men and women who might have been imprisoned or killed is permissible wherever it is possible. The Working Committee, however, expects workers in the cause to continue the struggle even though they might have to suffer privations.

5. Boycott of all foreign cloth, whether British or of other country, is obligatory under all circumstances.

6. All Congressmen and women are expected to use hand-spun and hand-woven khaddar to the exclusion of even cloth manufactured in the indigenous mills.

7. Picketing of liquor shops and foreign cloth shops should be vigorously conducted, chiefly by women, but always so as to ensure perfect non-violence.

8. Unlicensed manufacture and collections of salt should be resumed.

9. If processions and demonstrations are organized, only those should join them who will stand *lathi* charges or bullets without moving from their respective places.

10. Even in non-violent war, boycott of goods manufactured by the oppressor is perfectly lawful, inasmuch as it is never the duty of the victim to promote or retain commercial relations with the oppressor. Therefore boycott of British goods and concerns should be resumed and vigorously prosecuted.

do satisfaction in respect of the national demand. To this I wish to add the Second Settlement that was arrived at in Simla immediately prior to my departure for London. On examining the correspondence that has passed between myself and the Government, it would be seen that notwithstanding the truce, I had reserved to myself the right to take civil disobedience by way of defensive action in connection with the grievances about which relief might not be attainable through milder methods. Surely, if civil disobedience was such a heinous crime, the Government could never have exchanged correspondence on that basis and sent me to London with Viceregal blessings; but I see that with the change of times, manners have also changed.

#### RESPOND TO CHALLENGE

The nation must now respond to the challenge of the Government. It is to be hoped, however, that whilst people belonging to all classes and creeds will courageously and in all humility go through the fiery ordeal considering no price too dear and no sufferings too great, they will observe the strictest non-violence in thought, word and deed, no matter how great the provocation may be. I would also urge them not to be angry with the administrators. It is not easy for them to shed the habit handed down from generation to generation. Our quarrel is not with men but with measures.

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11. Pure breach of non-moral laws and of laws and orders injurious to people wherever considered possible and advisable may be practised.

12. All unjust orders issued under an Ordinance may be civilly disobeyed.

We have faith in ourselves and therefore in human nature to feel that, if we suffer long enough and in the proper spirit, our sufferings must result in converting administrators. After all, let us realise that the greater and the longer the sufferings, the greater would be our fitness for *Swarajya*, for which we are embarking upon a fiery ordeal. I would remind the nation of the pledge I gave to the Prime Minister towards the end of the Plenary Session of the Round Table Conference that there should be no malice in the struggle if it fell to our lot to resume it and that we would do nothing unworthy. I shall trust every Indian to redeem the pledge.

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### IN YERAWADA AGAIN

The release of the correspondence was followed by a Government statement explaining the issue between the Government and the Congress and the reasons why "civil disobedience cannot be permitted". The statement was refuted by Mr. Pyarelal, Gandhi's Private Secretary, in *Young India* while at the same time Pandit Malaviya released the correspondence between Mr. Gandhi and Sir Samuel Hoare in which the Mahatma had asked the Secretary of State to clear up certain misunderstandings. In releasing the Hoare-Gandhi correspondence, Pandit Malaviya made it clear that in seeking the interview with the Viceroy, Mr. Gandhi was actuated by no motive other than that of finding the way to peace and continued co-operation on the basis of the Delhi pact. "Your Excellency," he observed, "unfortunately persisted in rejecting Mahatma Gandhi's offer" which was made in all sincerity and good faith. The Working Committee resolution was merely tentative and was not intended to be a threat. "The pronouncements and action of the Government culminating in the Statement of January 4th clearly indicates that, even before the return home of Mahatma Gandhi, the Government had determined to launch a general attack on the Congress and had coolly concerted their plans for it. Herein, it seems, lies the true explanation of Your Excellency's refusal to grant an interview to Mahatma Gandhi." So wrote Pandit Malaviya.

Gandhiji and Vallabhai Patel were arrested under Regulation 35 of 1927 and put back in the Yeravada Central Jail on the 4th of January 1932.

## UNTOUCHABILITY

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In the dramatic triumph of Mahatma Gandhi's "Epic Fast" of September 1932, which effected a modification of the Premier's Communal Award we are apt to forget the long, patient and continuous service he has been rendering to the cause of the untouchables during more than three decades of his public life in South Africa and India. Gandhiji has consistently, from the very beginning, regarded "untouchability as the greatest blot on Hinduism". The problem presented no practical difficulties in South Africa where his 'untouchable' friends used to frequent his place and live and feed with him and his family without provoking any domestic discord or social ostracism. The case was, however, different in India. In his *Autobiography*, Mahatma Gandhi has described in some detail his experiences in dealing with the problem of the untouchables. So long as it was a mere question of controversy or argument, it was one thing. But when, in his usual manner, he began to carry out in practice the principles of equality and fraternity he was preaching, and in direct contravention of the custom of his neighbours began to admit a family of untouchables into his own household in the *Ashram*, he provoked what he called an "internal storm" as Mrs. Gandhi, unaccustomed to the new ways, could not reconcile herself to it. It took him some time to bring the family and his neighbours to his way of thinking. The story of the conversion and the struggle he had to pass through in effecting the reform of his own household is told with simple charm and naivete. His conviction was not the result of foreign residence or even the studies in Christian Literature. Speaking at Mayavaram, a centre of orthodoxy in South India, in May 1915 the year he returned to India after bidding farewell to South India, Gandhiji averred: "In so far as I have been able to study Hinduism outside India, I have felt that it is no part of real Hinduism to have in its fold a mass of people whom I would call 'untouchables'. If it was proved to me that this is an essential part of Hinduism, I for one would declare myself an open rebel against Hinduism itself."

That was the beginning of a movement for the removal of untouchability which has not ceased to this day, but has gone on gathering strength and momentum till by his own unique efforts it is now a first class issue of outstanding national importance. In one of his addresses to the untouchables themselves in May 1921, Mahatma Gandhi declared : ...



"I was hardly yet twelve when this idea had dawned on me. A scavenger named Uka, an 'untouchable', used to attend our house for cleaning latrines. Often I would ask my mother why it was wrong to touch him and why I was forbidden to do so. If I accidentally touched Uka I was asked to perform the ablutions; and though I naturally obeyed, it was not without smilingly protesting that 'untouchability' was not sanctioned by religion and that it was impossible that it should be so. I was a very dutiful and obedient child; but so far as was consistent with respect for my parents, I often had tussies with them on this matter. I told my mother that she was entirely wrong in considering physical contact with Uka as sinful; it could not be sinful. . . .

So long as Hindus wilfully regard 'untouchability' as part of their religion, so long as the mass of Hindus consider it a sin to touch a section of their brethren, *Swaraj* is impossible of attainment."

Indeed time and again Gandhiji made it clear that "without the removal of the taint of untouchability, *Swaraj* is a meaningless term. *Swaraj* is as inconceivable without full reparation to the 'depressed' classes as it is impossible without real Hindu-Muslim unity.

Untouchability is repugnant to reason and to the instinct of mercy, pity, and love.

No man can consider another man inferior to himself. He must consider every man as his blood-brother. It is the cardinal principle of every religion."

And like the saints of medieval India, he gave pathetic expression to the deep-moving cry: "I do not desire to be born again, but if I am really born again, I desire to be born amidst the untouchables, so as to share their difficulties and to work for their liberation." That has always been the note of his utterances on countless occasions. The ban against untouchability is one of the cardinal points of the *Satyagraha* pledge as of the conditions of *Swaraj*. But a leader of Gandhiji's type could not be content with mere declarations of faith or eloquent expositions of principles. He must lead, and when in 1925 he was lying ill at Juhu, the call came from Vykom in Travancore where a handful of *Satyagrahis* were determined to get access to the important thoroughfares near the temple. The Volunteers who had the blessings of Mahatma Gandhi, were receiving directions from his lieutenants who were conducting the operations in accordance with his plan. In fact, the Vykom struggle "represented a turning point in the campaign against untouchability". The success of this campaign led to other attempts at Passive Resistance which were more or less fruitful. Later in the year Mahatma Gandhi himself came to the scene and

guided the passive resisters with advice and encouragement. Thereafter he made an extensive tour of the country visiting the remotest parts of the countryside, untouched by the railways or civilization. What he saw of the untouchables in Malabar and Orissa filled "the bitter cup of sorrow and humiliation". Their poverty and degradation were even beyond his own worst apprehensions. "This untouchability," he cried, "is our greatest shame. The humiliation of it is sinking deeper and deeper." It was to relieve them of their distress that he preached the cult of the *charkha*. The spinning wheel, he rightly held, must mean economic salvation for the miserable wretches who were dying of want. Education and the avoidance of drink and cleaner personal habits were to raise their moral tone. Free intercourse with the higher castes and admission into their temples and public schools were to give them a social standing. And then they were to have their proper share of political rights and the privileges of public life. That has been his all-round plan for the uplift of the Harijans. When at the Round Table Conference he urged the Depressed Classes, to cast in their lot with the rest of the Hindus and not to stand apart, isolated and segregated, he meant it all for their good in a sense which the leaders of that community did not understand. They only wondered why Mr. Gandhi, who was so keen on the uplift of the depressed classes, should deny them separate electorates. And so they joined the Muslims and Europeans and demanded separate representation which they embodied in what is known as the Minorities Pact. But Gandhi "would not sell the vital interests of the untouchables even for the sake of winning *Swaraj*". He would not, as he said, "bargain away their rights for the kingdom of the whole world". He held that "he would far rather that Hinduism died than that untouchability lived". And in announcing the failure of his negotiations with the leaders of the communities for a settlement, he very mournfully expressed himself as follows at the Minorities Committee meeting on November 13, 1931: "I can understand the claims advanced by other communities but the claim advanced on behalf of the 'untouchables' is to me the unkindest cut of all. It means perpetual barbarism." And he concluded with the fateful words that "if he was the only person to resist this thing he would resist it with his life". The words which looked quite harmless then and somewhat like a rhetorical peroration were charged with a solemn warning. And when the Premier's Award was published on August 17, 1932, giving separate electorates to the Depressed Classes as in the case of Muslims and Europeans, Gandhi made his fateful resolve that he would "fast unto death" if that decision was not abandoned. Mahatma's correspondence with the Premier and the Secretary of State conveying this grim resolve was published on the 19th

September 1932 when Gandhiji himself was in prison. Government, however, gave full facilities to the leaders of communities to come in contact with Mahatmajī and find a way of settlement. Gandhiji's resolve had a dramatic effect on the whole country, and leaders of all parties, irrespective of political or communal differences, met with one accord to hammer out a solution so that the life of the Mahatma may be saved at any cost. Thus did the Yerawada Pact come into being—a pact which was at once accepted by the Government displacing the Premier's Award as desired by the Mahatma.

The text of the Gandhi-Macdonald-Hoare correspondence is given overleaf.

## CORRESPONDENCE WITH PREMIER

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### GANDHIJI'S LETTER TO SIR SAMUEL HOARE

The following is the letter from Mr. Gandhi to Sir Samuel Hoare, dated Yerawada Central Prison, March 11th, 1932 :

"Dear Sir Samuel,—You will perhaps recollect that at the end of my speech at the Round Table Conference when the Minorities' claim was presented, I had said that I should resist with my life the grant of separate electorate to the Depressed Classes.\* This was not said in the heat of the moment nor by way of rhetoric. It was meant to be a religious statement.

In pursuance of that statement, I had hoped on my return to India to mobilize public opinion against separate electorate at any rate for the Depressed Classes. But it was not to be.

From the newspapers I am permitted to read, I observe that any moment His Majesty's Government may declare their decision. At first I had thought that if the decision was found to create separate electorates for the Depressed Classes, I should take such steps as I might then consider necessary to give effect to my vow. But I feel it would be unfair to the British Government for me to act without giving previous notice. Naturally they could not attach the significance I give to my statement.

I need hardly reiterate all the objections I have to the creation of separate electorates for the Depressed

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\* See concluding portion of Gandhiji's speech at the Minorities Committee on November 18, 1931, page 833, paragraph beginning with "I can understand" . . . . . to "I will resist it with my life" on page 834.

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Classes. I feel as if I was one of them. Their case stands on a wholly different footing from that of others. I am not against [their representation in the legislatures. I should favour every one of their adults, male and female, being registered as voters irrespective of education or property qualifications even though the franchise test may be stricter for others. But I hold that separate electorate is harmful for them and for Hinduism whatever it may be from a purely political standpoint. To appreciate the [harm that separate electorates would do them, one has to know how they are distributed amongst the so-called Caste Hindus and how dependent they are on the latter. So far as Hinduism is concerned, separate electorate would simply vivisect and disrupt it. For me the question of these classes is predominantly moral and religious. The political aspect, important though it is, dwindles into insignificance compared to the moral and religious issue. You will have to appreciate my feelings in this matter by remembering that I have been interested in the condition of these classes from my boyhood and have more than once staked my all for their sake. I say this not to pride myself in any way. I feel that no penance Caste Hindus may do, can in any way compensate for the calculated degradation to which they have consigned the Depressed Classes for centuries. But I know that separate electorate is neither penance nor any remedy for the crushing degradation they have groaned under.

I therefore respectfully inform His Majesty's Government that in the event of their decision creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes, I must fast unto death.

I am painfully conscious of the fact that such a step, whilst I am a prisoner, must cause grave embarrassment to

His Majesty's Government and that it will be regarded by many as highly improper on the part of one holding my position to introduce into the political field methods which they would describe as hysterical, if not much worse. All that I can urge in defence is that, for me, the contemplated step is not a method, it is a part of my being. It is the call of conscience which I dare not disobey, even though it may cost whatever reputation for sanity I may possess.

So far as I can see now, my discharge from imprisonment would not make the duty of fasting any the less imperative.

I am hoping however that all my fears are wholly unjustified and that the British Government have no intention whatever of creating separate electorate for the Depressed Classes.

It is perhaps as well for me to refer to another matter that is agitating me and which may also enforce a similar fast. It is the way repression is going on. I have no notion when I may receive the shock that would compel the sacrifice. Repression appears to me to be crossing what might be called legitimate. Governmental terrorism is spreading through the land. Both English and Indian officials are being brutalised. The latter, high and low, are becoming demoralised by reason of the Government regarding as meritorious disloyalty to the people and inhuman conduct towards their own kith and kin. The latter are being cowed down. Free speech has been stifled. Goondaism is being practised in the name of law and order. Women who have come out for public service stand in fear of their honour being insulted.

And all this, as it seems to me, being done in order to crush the spirit of freedom which the Congress represents. Repression is not confined to punishing civil



breaches of the common law. It goads people to break the newly made orders of autocracy designed for the most part to humiliate them.

In all these doings, as I read them, I see no spirit of democracy. Indeed, my recent visit to England has confirmed my opinion that your democracy is a superficial circumscribed thing. In the weightiest matters, decisions are taken by individuals or groups without any reference to the Parliament and these have been ratified by Members having but a vague notion of what they were doing. Such was the case with Egypt and the War of 1914 and such is the case with India. My whole being rebels against the idea that in a system called democratic, one man should have unfettered power of affecting the destiny of an ancient people numbering over three hundred millions and that his decisions can be enforced by mobilising the most terrible forces of destruction. To me this is a negation of democracy.

And this repression cannot be prolonged without further embittering the already bitter relations between the two peoples. In so far as I am responsible and can help it, how am I to arrest the process? No, by stopping Civil Disobedience. For me it is an article of faith. I regard myself by nature a democrat. The democracy of my conception is wholly inconsistent with the use of physical force for enforcing its will. Civil resistance therefore has been conceived to be a proper substitute for physical force to be used wherever generally the latter is held necessary or justifiable. It is a process of self-suffering and a part of the plan is, that in given circumstances a civil resister must sacrifice himself even by fasting to a finish. That moment has not yet arrived for me. I have no undeniable call from within for such

a step. But events happening outside are alarming enough to agitate my fundamental being. Therefore in writing to you about the possibility of a fast regarding the Depressed Classes, I felt I would be untrue to you if I did not tell you also there was another possibility, not remote, of such a fast.

Needless to say, from my side absolute secrecy has been maintained about all the correspondence I have carried on with you. Of course, Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Mr. Mahadev Desai who have just been sent to join us, know all about it. But you will no doubt make whatever use you wish of this letter."

## SIR SAMUEL HOARE'S REPLY

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The following is the letter, dated April 13th, 1932, from Sir Samuel Hoare to Mr. Gandhi:

"Dear Mr. Gandhi,—I write in answer to your letter of the 11th March and I say at once that I realise fully the strength of your feeling upon the question of separate electorates for the Depressed Classes. I can only say that we intend to give you any decision that may be necessary solely and only upon the merits of the case. As you are aware, Lord Lothian's Committee has not yet completed its tour and it must be some weeks before we can receive any conclusions at which it may have arrived. When we receive the report we shall have to give most careful consideration to its recommendations, and we shall not give a decision until we have taken into account, in addition to the views expressed by the Committee, the views that you and those who think with you have so forcibly expressed. I feel sure that if you were in our position, you would be taking exactly the same action we intend to take. You would await the Committee's Report, you would then give it your fullest consideration, and before arriving at a final decision, you would take into account the views that have been expressed on both sides of the controversy. More than this I cannot say. Indeed, I do not imagine that you would expect me to say more.

As to the Ordinances, I can only repeat what I have already said, both publicly and privately. I am convinced that it was essential to impose them in the face of the deliberate attack upon the very foundations of ordered government. I am also convinced that both the Government of India and the Local Governments are not abusing their extensive powers and are doing everything possible to prevent excessive or vindictive action. We shall not keep the emergency measures in force any longer than we are obliged to for the purpose of maintaining the essentials of law and order and protecting our officials and other classes of the community against terrorist outrages."

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## LETTER TO MR. RAMSAY MACDONALD

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Letter from Mr. Gandhi, dated Yerawada Central Prison, August 18, 1932, to the Prime Minister Mr. Ramsay MacDonald :

"Dear Friend,—There can be no doubt that Sir Samuel Hoare has showed you and the Cabinet my letter to him of 11th March on the question of the representation of the Depressed Classes. That letter should be treated as part of this letter and be read together with this.

I have read the British Government's decision on the representation of the Minorities and have slept over it. In pursuance of my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare and my declaration at the meeting of the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference on the 13th November 1931, at St. James's Palace, I have to resist your decision with my life. The only way I can do so is by declaring a perpetual fast unto death from food of any kind, save water with or without salt and soda. This fast will cease if during its progress the British Government of its own motion or under the pressure of public opinion revise their decision and their scheme of communal electorates for the Depressed Classes, whose representatives should be elected by general electorate under common franchise no matter how wide it is.

The proposed fast will come into operation in the ordinary course from the noon of 20th September next unless the said decision is meanwhile revised in the manner suggested above.

I am asking the authorities here to cable the text of this letter to you so as to give you ample notice.

But in any case I am leaving sufficient time for this letter to reach you in time by the slowest route.

I also ask that this letter and my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, already referred to, be published at the earliest possible moment. On my part I have scrupulously observed the rule of the jail and have communicated my desire or the contents of the two letters to no one save my two companions, Sardar Vallabhai Patel and Sjt. Mahadev Desai. But I want, if you make it possible, public opinion to be affected by my letters. Hence my request for their early publication.

I regret the decision that I have taken. But as a man of religion that I hold myself to be, I have no other course left open to me. As I have said in my letter to Sir Samuel Hoare, even if His Majesty's Government decided to release me in order to save themselves embarrassment, my fast will have to continue. For, I cannot now hope to resist the decision by any other means. And I have no desire whatsoever to compass my release by any means other than honourable.

It may be that my judgment is warped and that I am wholly in error in regarding separate electorates for the Depressed Classes as harmful to them or Hinduism. If so, I am not likely to be in the right with reference to other parts of my philosophy of life. In that case, my death by fasting will be at once a penance for my error and a lifting of a weight from off those numberless men and women who have a child-like faith in my wisdom. Whereas if my judgment is right, as I have little doubt it is, the contemplated step is but a due fulfilment of the scheme of life which I have tried for more than a quarter of a century apparently not without considerable success."

## THE PREMIER'S REPLY

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Letter from Mr. Ramsay MacDonald, 10 Downing Street, date 1 September 8th, 1932 :

"Dear Mr. Gandhi,—I have received your letter with much surprise and let me add with very sincere regret. Moreover I cannot help thinking that you have written it under a misunderstanding as to what the decision of His Majesty's Government as regards the Depressed Classes really implies.

We have always understood that you were irrevocably opposed to permanent segregation of the Depressed Classes from the Hindu community. You made your position very clear on the Minorities Committee of the Round Table Conference and you expressed it again in the letter you wrote to Sir Samuel Hoare on the 11th March. We also knew that your view was shared by a great body of Hindu opinion and we therefore took it into most careful account when we were considering the question of the representation of the Depressed Classes.

Whilst in view of the numerous appeals we have received from the Depressed Classes organisations and the generally admitted social disabilities under which they labour and which you have recognised, we felt it our duty to safeguard what we believed to be the right of the Depressed Classes to a fair proportion of representation in the legislatures, we were equally careful to do nothing that would split off their community from the Hindu world. You yourself stated in your letter of March 11th that you were not against their representation in the legislatures. Under the Government's scheme, the Depressed Classes will remain part of the Hindu community and will vote with the Hindu electorate on an equal footing ; but for the first twenty years, while still remaining electorally part of the Hindu community, they will receive through a limited number of special constituencies the means of safeguarding their rights and interests that we are convinced is necessary under the present conditions. Where these constituencies are created, the members of the Depressed Classes will not be deprived of their votes in the general Hindu constituencies but will have two votes in order that their membership of the Hindu community should remain unimpaired. We deliberately decided against the creation of what you describe as communal electorate for the Depressed Classes and include all Depressed Classes voters in the general or Hindu constituencies so that the higher caste candidates should have to solicit their votes or Depressed Class candidates

should have to solicit the votes of higher castes at the election. Thus in every way was the unity of Hindu society preserved.

We felt however that during the early period of Responsible Government, when power in the Provinces would pass to whoever possessed a majority in the legislatures, it was essential that the Depressed Classes whom you have yourself described in your letter to Sir Samuel Hoare as having been consigned by Caste Hindus to calculated degradation for centuries, should return a certain number of members of their own choosing to the legislatures of seven of the nine Provinces to voice their grievances and their ideals and prevent decisions going against them without the legislature and Government listening to their case—in a word to place them in a position to speak for themselves which every fair-minded person must agree to be necessary. We did not consider the method of electing special representatives by reservation of seats in the existing conditions under any system of franchise which is practicable, of members who could genuinely represent them and be responsible for them, because in practically all cases such members would be elected by a majority consisting of the higher caste Hindus.

The special advantage initially given under our scheme to the Depressed Classes by means of a limited number of special constituencies in addition to their normal electoral rights in the general Hindu constituencies is wholly different in conception and effect from the method of representation adopted for a minority such as Moslems by means of separate communal electorates. For example, a Moslem cannot vote or be a candidate in a general constituency whereas any electorally qualified member of the Depressed Classes can vote in and stand for a general constituency. The number of territorial seats allotted to Moslems is naturally conditioned by the fact that it is impossible for them to gain any further territorial seats and in most provinces they enjoy weightage in excess of their population ratio. The number of special seats to be filled from special Depressed Class constituencies will be seen to be small and has been fixed not to provide a quota numerically appropriate for the total representation of the whole of the Depressed Class population but solely to secure a minimum number of spokesmen for the Depressed Classes in the legislature who are chosen exclusively by Depressed Classes. The proportion of their special seats is everywhere much below the population percentage of the Depressed Classes.

As I understand your attitude, you propose to adopt the extreme course of starving yourself to death, not in order to secure that the Depressed Classes should have joint electorates with other Hindus, because that is already provided, nor to maintain the unity of the Hindus which is also provided, but solely to prevent the Depressed Classes who admittedly suffer

from terrible disabilities to-day from being able to secure a limited number of representatives of their own choosing to speak on their behalf in the legislatures which will have a dominating influence over their future. In the light of these very fair and cautious proposals, I am quite unable to understand the reason of the decision you have taken and can only think you have made it under a misapprehension of the actual facts.

In response to a very general request from Indians after they had failed to produce a settlement themselves, the Government, much against its will, undertook to give a decision on the Minorities question. They have now given it and they cannot be expected to alter it except on the conditions they have stated. I am afraid therefore that my answer to you must be that the Government's decision stands and that only an agreement of the communities themselves can substitute other electoral arrangements for those that the Government have devised in a sincere endeavour to weigh conflicting claims on their just merits.

You ask that this correspondence, including your letter to Sir Samuel Hoare of March 11th, should be published. As it would seem to me unfair if your present intention were to deprive you of the opportunity of explaining to the public the reason why you intend to fast, I readily accede to the request if, on reconsideration, you repeat it. Let me however once again urge you to consider the actual details of the Government's decision and ask yourself seriously the question whether it really justifies you in taking the action you contemplate."

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## GANDHIJI'S FINAL LETTER

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Letter from Mr. (Gandhi), dated the Yerawada Central Prison, 9th September, 1932, to Mr. Ramsay MacDonald :

"Dear Friend,—I have to thank you for your frank and full letter telegraphed and received this day. I am sorry however that you put upon the contemplated step an interpretation that never crossed my mind. I have claimed to speak on behalf of the very class, to sacrifice whose interests you impute to me a desire to fast myself to death. I had hoped that the extreme step itself would effectively prevent any such selfish interpretation. Without urging, I affirm, that for me, this matter is one of pure religion. The mere fact of the Depressed Classes having double-votes does not protect them or the Hindu society in general from being disrupted. In the establishment of separate electorate at all for the Depressed Classes, I sense the injection of a poison that is calculated to destroy Hinduism and do no good whatever to the Depressed Classes.

You will please permit me to say no matter how sympathetic you may be, you cannot come to a correct decision on a matter of such vital and religious importance to the parties concerned. I should not be against even over-representation of the Depressed Classes. What I am against is their statutory separation even in a limited form from the Hindu fold so long as they choose to belong to it.

Do you realise that if your decision stands and the Constitution comes into being, you arrest the marvellous

growth of the work of the Hindu reformers who have dedicated themselves to the uplift of their suppressed brethren in every walk of life?

I have therefore been compelled reluctantly to adhere to the decision conveyed to you?

As your letter may give rise to a misunderstanding, I wish to state that the fact of my having isolated for special treatment the Depressed Classes question from other parts of your decision, does not in any way mean that I approve of or am reconciled to other parts of the decision. In my opinion many other parts are open to a very grave objection. Only I do not consider them to be any warrant for calling from me such self-immolation as my conscience has prompted me to in the matter of the Depressed Classes."

## LETTER TO BOMBAY GOVERNMENT

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The following is the statement that Mahatma Gandhi sent to the Bombay Government on September 15, 1932, on his decision to fast in connection with the Depressed Classes problem. The Statement was released to the Press on September 21, 1932:

The fast which I am approaching was resolved upon in the name of God for His work and as I believe in all humility at His call. Friends have urged me to postpone the date for the sake of giving the public a chance to organise itself. I am sorry that it is not open to me to change even the hour except for the reason stated in my letter to the Prime Minister.

### THE PURPOSE OF THE FAST

The impending fast is against those who have faith in me, whether Indians or foreigners and for those who have it not. Therefore, it is not against the English official world but it is against those Englishmen and women, who, in spite of contrary teaching of official world, believe in me and the justice of the cause I represent, nor is it against those of my countrymen who have no faith in me whether they be Hindus or others, but it is against these countless Indians no matter to what persuasion they belong who believe that I represent a just cause. Above all, it is intended to sting the Hindu conscience into right religious action. The contemplated fast is no appeal to mere emotion. By fast, I want to throw the whole of my weight (such as it is) in the scales of justice pure and simple. Therefore, there need be no undue haste in a feverish anxiety to save my life.

I implicitly believe in the truth of the saying that "no blade of grass moves but by His will".

He will save it if He needs it for further service. In this body, none can save it against His will. Humanly speaking, I believe it will stand the strain for some time.

Separate electorate is merely the last straw. No patched up agreement between caste Hindu leaders and rival Depressed Classes leaders will answer the purpose. An agreement to be valid has to be real. If the Hindu mass mind is not yet prepared to banish untouchability root and branch, it must sacrifice me without the slightest hesitation.

#### NO COERCION

There should be no coercion of those who are opposed to joint electorate. I have no difficulty in understanding their bitter opposition. They have every right to distrust me. Do I not belong to that Hindu section miscalled the superior class or caste Hindus who have ground down to powder the so-called untouchables? My marvel is that the latter have remained nevertheless in the Hindu fold. But whilst I can justify this opposition, I believe that they are in error. They will, if they can, separate the Depressed Classes entirely from the Hindu society and form them into a separate class—a standing and a living reproach to Hinduism. I should not mind if thereby their interest could be really served. But my intimate acquaintance with every shade of untouchability convinces me that their lives such as they are, are so intimately mixed up with those of Caste Hindus in whose midst and for whom they live that it is impossible to separate them. They are part of the individual family.

#### NO COMPROMISE

Their revolt against the Hindus with whom they live and their apostasy from Hinduism I should understand but this is so far as I can see they will not do. There is a

subtle something—quite indefinable in Hinduism—which keeps them in it even in spite of themselves. And this fact makes it imperative for a man like me, with a living experience of it, to resist the contemplated separation even though the effort should cost life itself. The implications of this resistance are tremendous. No compromise which does not ensure the fullest freedom for the Depressed Classes inside the Hindu fold can be an adequate substitute for the contemplated separation, and the betrayal of the trust can merely postpone the day of immolation for me and henceforth for those who think with me. The problem before responsible Hindus is to consider whether in the event of social, civic or political persecution of the Depressed Classes, they are prepared to face *Satyagraha* in the shape of perpetual fast, not of one reformer like me, but an increasing army of reformers who, I believe, do exist to-day in India and who will count their lives of no cost to achieve the liberation of these classes and thereby free Hinduism of age-long superstition. Let us fellow-reformers who have worked with me also appreciate the implications of the fast. It is either an hallucination of mine or an illumination. If it is the former, I must be allowed to do my penance in peace. It will be the lifting of the dead weight on Hinduism. If it is illumination, may my agony purify Hinduism and even melt the hearts of those who are at present disposed to distrust me.

#### SATUTORY RESERVATION

Since there appears to be a misunderstanding as to the application of my fast, I may repeat that it is aimed at statutory separate electorate in any shape or form for the Depressed Classes. Immediately that threat is removed, once for all my fast will end. I hold strong views about

reservation of seats, as also about the most proper method of dealing with the whole question. But I consider myself unfit as a prisoner to set forth my proposals. I should, however, abide by any agreement on the basis of joint electorates that may be arrived at between responsible leaders of Caste Hindus and Depressed Classes and which has been accepted by mass meetings of all Hindus. One thing I must make clear :

The satisfactory ending of the Depressed Classes question, if it is to come, should in no way be construed that I am committed to the acceptance of His Majesty's Government's decision on other parts of the communal question. I am personally opposed to many other parts of it which, to my mind, make the working of any free democratic constitution well-nigh impossible nor would the satisfactory solution of this question in any way bind me to accept the constitution that may be framed. These are political questions for the Indian National Congress to consider and determine. They are utterly outside my province in my individual capacity. Nor may I as prisoner air my individual views on these questions. My fast has a narrow application.

#### FASTING FOR LIGHT

The Depressed Classes question being predominantly a religious matter, I regard it as specially my own by reason of life-long concentration on it. It is a sacred personal trust which I may not shirk. Fasting for light and penance is a hoary institution. I have observed it in Christianity and Islam. Hinduism is replete with instances of fasting for purification and penance. But if it is privilege, it is also a duty. Moreover, to the best of my light, I have reduced it to a science. As an expert therefore, I would warn friends and sympathisers

against copying me blindly or out of false or hysterical sympathy. Let all such qualify themselves by hard work and selfless service of "untouchables" and they would have independent light if their time for fasting has come.

Lastly, in so far as I know myself, this fast is being undertaken with purest of motives and without malice or anger against any single soul. For me it is the expression of and the last seal on non-violence. Those, therefore, who would use violence in this controversy against those whom they may consider to be inimical to me or the cause I represent will simply hasten my end. Perfect courtesy and consideration towards opponents is an absolute essential of success in this cause at least if not in all cases.

## THE ETHICS OF FASTING

"I am a touchable by birth but I am an untouchable by choice," declared Mahatma Gandhi in the first Press interview given on the 20th September 1932 (nearly ten months after his entry into the Yerawada jail). In the course of the interview, Mahatma Gandhi stressed the ethical and spiritual aspect of fasting and referred to the example of Christ and Mahomed and said he was "entering it—on a much humbler and lower scale—so that he could engage in a tussle with God." The Mahatma continued :

My cards have always been on the table. So far as the present instance is concerned, I could say nothing whatever from behind prison bars. Now that I have got an opportunity given to me only a few hours ago, I have answered the first call from the Press. And had the statement I sent to the Government on September 15 been immediately issued to the Press, that statement would have explained my decision.

Briefly put, it is this, that my fast is only against separate electorates and not against statutory reservation of seats for the suppressed classes is only partly true. Opposed I certainly was to statutory reservation as I am now, but there never was put before me a scheme of statutory reservation for acceptance or rejection. Therefore, there was no question of my having to decide upon that point. When I developed my own idea about statutory reservation, I certainly expressed my emphatic disapproval, and in my humble opinion, statutory reservation instead of doing service to the suppressed classes will do "them harm in the sense that it will stop their natural evolution. Statutory reservation is like support and a man who rules upon support to that extent weakens himself. If people won't laugh at me, I would gently put in a claim which I have always asserted, namely, that I am a touchable by birth but I am an untouchable by choice, and I have endeavoured



in my own fashion to qualify myself to represent not the upper ten even amongst the untouchables, because be it said to our shame, there are castes and classes even among untouchables.

“WHAT I WANT”

My ambition, therefore, has been to represent and identify myself so far as it is possible with the lowest strata among untouchables, namely, the invisibles and the unapproachables whom I always have before my mind's eye wherever I go; for, I have drunk deep of this poison cup. I met them in Malabar. I met some of them in Orissa and I am convinced if they are ever to rise, it will not be by reservation of seats. It will be by strenuous work done by Hindu reformers in their midst and it is because I feel that this separation would have killed all prospect of reform that my whole soul rebelled against it.

Let me make it plain that the withdrawal of a separate electorate will satisfy the letter of my vow. It will never satisfy the spirit behind it, and in my capacity of a self-chosen untouchable, I am not going to rest content with a patched up pact between the touchables and the untouchables. What I want, what I am living for and what I should delight in dying for is the eradication of untouchability, root and branch. I want, therefore, a living pact whose life-giving effect should be felt not in distant to-morrow but to-day and therefore that pact should be sealed by an All-India demonstration of touchables and untouchables meeting together, not by way of theatrical show, but in real brotherly embrace, and it is in order to achieve this dream of my life for the past fifty years that I have entered the fiery gate.

The British Government's decision was the last straw, the decisive symptom. Therefore, with the unerring eye of physician that I claim to be in such matters I detected the symptom and therefore for me the abolition of separate electorate would be but the beginning of the end. I would warn all those leaders who are assembled in Bombay and others against coming to any hasty decision.

#### MY LIFE I COUNT OF NO CONSEQUENCE

Hundred such lives given for this noble cause would, in my opinion, be a poor penance done by Hindus for the atrocious wrongs heaped on helpless men and women of their own faith. I, therefore, would urge them not to swerve an inch from the path of the strictest justice. My fast I want to throw in the scales of justice and it wakes up Caste Hindus from their slumber. This has no connection with politics in any shape or form. Not that it will have no political results. It will have great political results but the fundamental thing is its religious and moral aspect. I take religion here in the broadest sense of the term, because in attacking untouchability I believed I had gone to the very root of the matter and therefore it is an issue of a transcendental value far surpassing *Swaraj* in terms of political constitution and would be a dead weight if it was not backed by a moral basis in the shape of the present hope engendered in the breasts of the down-trodden millions that a dead weight was going to be lifted off their shoulders and it is only because English officials cannot possibly see this living side of the picture that in their ignorance and self-satisfaction, they dare sit as judges upon questions that affect the fundamental being of millions of people, and here I mean both Caste Hindus and Untouchables, that is the suppressors and the suppressed, and it was in order to wake up even the officialdom from its gross ignorance, if I may make use of this expression without being guilty of giving offence, that I felt impelled by the voice from within to offer resistance with the whole of my being.

## THE YERAWADA PACT

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For five days from the 19th to the 24th September, 1932, the leaders of communities were in consultation among themselves and also with Gandhiji in a spirit of reason and goodwill. The spectacle of Gandhiji fasting to death under the mango tree in Yerawada jail cast a spell over the whole congregation who were determined to find a formula which would at once satisfy the needs of all parties and save the life of the Mahatma. Thanks to the good offices of friends and the will to peace displayed by the leaders of the Depressed Classes such an agreement\* was possible. The Conference which met at Bombay under the presidentship of Pandit Malaviya was thus able to come to a unanimous agreement which was approved by Mr. Gandhi and cabled to the Premier for acceptance on the 24th. On the conclusion of the agreement hundreds of cables had been sent over to the British Government to accept the decision without delay and ratify the agreement. Thanks to the promptness of the Premier and Secretary of State, the agreement was at once accepted.

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\* The following is the text of the agreement which was arrived at between the leaders acting on behalf of the Depressed Classes and of the rest of the Hindu community regarding the representation of the Depressed Classes in the legislatures and certain other matters affecting their welfare:—

1. There shall be seats reserved for the Depressed Classes out of general electorates. Seats in Provincial Legislatures shall be as follows :

Madras	...	30
Bombay with Sind	...	15
Punjab	...	8
Behar and Orisa	...	18
Central Provinces	...	20
Assam	...	7
Bengal	...	30
United Provinces	...	20

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Total ... 148

These figures are based on the total strength of the Provincial Councils announced in the Prime Minister's decision.

2. Election to these seats shall be by joint electorates subject, however, to the following procedure—

The Premier's reply approving the decision was communicated to Mr. Gandhi on the afternoon of the 26th September, 1932. Thereafter Mr. Gandhi broke the fast amidst impressive setting and issued the following statement:

The fast undertaken in the name of God was broken in the presence of Gurudev, the Poet Rabindranath Tagore, and a leper prisoner and Parachure Shastri, a learned Pandit, seated opposite to each other, and in the company of loving and loved ones who had gathered round me. The breaking was preceded by the Poet singing one of his Bengali hymns, then *mantras* from

All members of the Depressed Classes registered in the general electoral roll of a constituency will form an electoral college which will elect a panel of four candidates belonging to the Depressed Classes for each of such reserved seats by the method of single vote, and four persons getting the highest number of votes in such primary election shall be the candidates for election by the general electorate.

Representation of the Depressed Classes in the Central Legislature shall likewise be on the principle of joint electorates and reserved seats by the method of primary election in the manner provided for in Clause 2 above for their representation in Provincial Legislatures.

4. In the Central Legislature 18 per cent. of the seats allotted to the general electorate for British India in the said legislature shall be reserved for the Depressed Classes.

5. The system of primary election to panel of candidates for election to the Central and Provincial Legislatures, as hereinbefore mentioned, shall come to an end after the first ten years unless terminated sooner by mutual agreement under the provision of Clause 6 below.

6. The system of representation of the Depressed Classes by reserved seats in the Provincial and Central Legislatures as provided for in Clauses 1 and 4 shall continue until determined by mutual agreement between the communities concerned in this settlement.

7. The franchise for the Central and Provincial Legislatures for the Depressed Classes shall be as indicated in the Lothian Committee Report.

8. There shall be no disabilities attaching to anyone on the ground of his being a member of the Depressed Classes in regard to any elections to local bodies or appointment to public service.

the Upanishad by Parachure Shastri, and my favourite hymn 'Vaishnavajanana'.

The hand of God has been visible in the glorious manifestation throughout the length and the breadth of India during the past seven days. The cables received from many parts of the world blessing the fast have sustained me through the agony of body and soul that I passed through during the seven days, but the cause was worth going through that agony.

The sacrificial fire, once lit, shall not be put out as long as there is the slightest trace of untouchability still left in Hinduism. If it is God's will that it does not end with my life, I have the confidence that there are several thousands of earnest reformers, who will lay down their lives in order to purify Hinduism of this awful curse.

The settlement arrived at is, so far as I can see, a generous gesture on all sides. It is meeting of hearts, and Hindu gratitude is due to Dr. Ambedkar and Rao Bahadur Srinivasan and his party on the one hand and Rao Bahadur M. C. Raja on the other. They could have taken up an uncompromising and defiant attitude by way of punishment to the so-called Caste Hindus for the sins of generations. If they had done so, I at least could not have resented their attitude, and my death would have been but a trifling price exacted for the tortures that the the outcastes of Hinduism have been

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Every endeavour shall be made to secure a fair representation of the Depressed Classes in these respects subject to such educational qualifications as may be laid down for appointment to public services.

9. In every province out of the educational grant an adequate sum shall be earmarked for providing educational facilities to members of the Depressed Classes.

going through for unknown generation. But they chose a nobler path and have thus shown that they have followed the precept of forgiveness enjoined by all religions.

Let me hope that Caste Hindus will prove themselves worthy of the forgiveness and carry out to the letter and spirit every clause of the settlement with all its implications.

#### THE BEGINNING OF THE END

The settlement\* is but the beginning of the end. The political part of it is very important, though it no doubt occupies but a small space in the vast field of reform that has to be tackled by Caste Hindus during the coming days, namely, complete removal of the social and religious disabilities under which a large part of Hindu population has been groaning. I should be guilty of a breach of trust if I do not warn fellow-reformers and Caste Hindus in general that the breaking of the

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\* The following is the text of the resolutions passed at the meeting of the Hindus' Conference in Bombay on the 25th September 1932:

1. This Conference confirms the Poona agreement arrived at between the leaders of the Caste Hindus and Depressed Classes on September 24, 1932, and trusts that the British Government will withdraw its decision creating separate electorates within the Hindu community and accept the agreement in full. The Conference urges that immediate action be taken by Government so as to enable Mahatma Gandhi to break his fast within the terms of his vow and before it becomes too late. The Conference appeals to the leaders of the communities concerned to realize the implications of the agreement and of this resolution and to make earnest endeavour to fulfil them.

2. This Conference resolves that henceforth no one shall be regarded as untouchable by reason of his birth and that those who have been so regarded hitherto will have the same rights as other Hindus in regard to the use of public wells, public roads and other public institutions. These rights shall have statutory recognition at the first opportunity and shall be one of the earliest acts of the *Swaraj* Parliament if it shall not have received such recognition before that time.

fast carries with it the sure promise of a resumption of it, if this reform is not relentlessly pursued and achieved within a measurable period. I had thought of laying down a period, but I feel that I may not do so without a definite call from within.

The message of freedom shall penetrate every Untouchable home and that can only happen if reformers will cover every village. Yet, in the wave of enthusiasm and in an inordinate desire to spare me a repetition of the agony, there should be no coercion. We must, by patient toil, and self-suffering, convert the ignorant and the superstitious, but never seek to compel them by force.

## THE AFTERMATH

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It must be said to the credit of all concerned that the whole business of the agreement was transacted with the utmost promptness possible and the Government also acted with a due sense of the importance and urgency of the occasion. Government's acceptance of the Pact was also announced by Mr. Haig, the Home Member, in a statement in the Assembly on September 26, 1932. On the completion of this business the restrictions on Gandhiji were reimposed on September 30. But from November 4 onwards facilities for conducting 'untouchability' work from prison were restored to him and Gandhiji thereafter began to issue a series of statements in which he called upon the Caste Hindus to play their part in the matter of removing untouchability. In fact the removal of the restrictions on Mr. Gandhi to enable him to continue his campaign against untouchability was obviously prompted by his warning to join Mr. Kelappan in his "fast into death" if the Gurusvayur temple in Malabar was not thrown open to the Harijans by the 1st January 1933. Gandhiji held himself bound by his vow to Mr. Kelappan to join him in his attempt to see the temple gates thrown open to the Harijans as it was at his instance that Mr. Kelappan broke his fast about the time that Gandhiji himself had recovered from the effects of his own fast. After considerable negotiation and discussion, Gandhiji postponed the fast with a view to assess the mind of the temple-going people on the issue and also to await the Viceroy's sanction to the two Bills on untouchability to be introduced in the Assembly and in the Madras Council. The Gurusvayur Referendum having shown a decided majority for allowing the Harijans to enter the temple, Gandhiji was preparing the ground for a final struggle. On the 23rd January 1932 was published the announcement that H. E. the Viceroy had sanctioned the introduction of Mr. C. S. Ranga Iyer's "Untouchability Abolition Bill" in the Assembly while permission was refused to Dr. Subbaroyan's Temple Entry Bill in the Madras Council on the ground that it is an All India issue. Efforts however were soon made to adapt Dr. Subbaroyan's Bill to the requirements of the Assembly where it was to be discussed in a separate resolution. The amended resolution was accepted by the Viceroy. Touching the Viceregal decision, Gandhiji hurled another of his verbal missiles on the 24th January 1932 and declared that



"the movement for temple-entry now broadens from Guruvayur in the extreme South to Haridwar in the North and my fast though it remains further postponed depends not, now, upon Guruvayur only but extends automatically to the temples in general. That is to say the fast becomes dependent upon the actions of reformers not regarding the Madras Bill which was to cover Guruvayur only but regarding the All-India Bill which covers all temples including Guruvayur."

And he concluded the statement that no further ordinary propaganda will convict the Hindn mind of the sense of wrong of untouchability if it is not already convicted by years of work in that behalf.

"It requires then as it has done before now an extraordinary propaganda of penance. It may be that it needs the stimulus of fast on the part of one who has made his life one with them. If so, they shall have it. They must either remove untouchability or remove me from their midst."

## HINDU-MUSLIM QUESTION

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Among the priceless teachings of Hinduism nothing has impressed Gandhiji more deeply than its tolerance if we exclude *Ahimsa* which has exercised such a profound influence on his life and thoughts. "Is the God of the Mahomedan," he asks, "different from the God of the Hindu? Religions are different roads converging to the same point. What does it matter that we take different roads so long as we reach the same goal?" That has been the burden of his teaching. And that has a practical bearing also in the conditions of India. "The Hindus, the Mahomedans, the Parsis and the Christians who have made India their country are fellow-countrymen, and they will have to live in unity if only for their own interest." For have not the Hindus flourished under Moslem sovereigns and Moslems under the Hindu? Hindu-Muslim Unity, said Gandhiji on another occasion, consists in "our having a common purpose, a common goal and common sorrows". And what could be more inspiring than the *Swaraj* to be won by common endeavours? "*Swaraj* for India must be an impossible dream without an indissoluble union between the Hindus and Muslims of India. It must not be a mere truce. It cannot be based upon mutual fear. It must be a partnership between equals each respecting the religion of the other." And what is the alternative to Hindu-Muslim Unity? Perpetual slavery. "And therefore," said Gandhiji, "I have thrown myself heart and soul into this Khilafat question." This spirit of comradeship has grown with Gandhiji from the beginning. A story is told as to how this feeling developed since his boyhood. While at school he would often happen to touch the untouchables; and as he was never in the habit of concealing it from his parents, his mother used to tell him that "the shortest cut to purification, after the unholy touch, was to cancel it by touching any Mussulman passer-by". Thus in the years that followed, he could make no distinction between his Hindu and Muslim colleagues and friends, and among his fellow-workers and followers were to be found men and women of the Islamic faith no less deeply devoted to him and to his cause than his Hindu comrades and disciples. In fact, religion or race or creed or colour seems to have made no difference in the allegiance and loyalty of friends and fellow-workers or in his own regard and attachment to them.

## THE KHILAFAT AND THE COW

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That Hindus should help the Muslims in the Khilafat struggle and that the Muslims should respect Hindu feeling regarding the protection of the cow were the theme of countless essays and speeches. Thus in the *Young India* of July 28, 1921, Mahatma Gandhi wrote:

Everybody knows that without unity between Hindus and Mussulmans, no certain progress can be made by the nation. There is no doubt that the cement binding the two is yet loose and wet. There is still mutual distrust. The leaders have come to recognise that India can make no advance without both feeling the need of trust and common action. But though there is a vast change among the masses, it is still not permanent quantity. The Mussulman masses do not still recognise the same necessity for *Sacraj* as the Hindus do. The Mussulmans do not flock to public meetings in the same numbers as the Hindus. This process cannot be forced. Sufficient time has not passed for the national interest to be awakened among the Mussulmans. Indeed it is a marvel, that whereas but a year ago the Mussulmans as a body hardly took any interest in Congress affairs, all over India thousands have registered themselves as members. This in itself is an immense gain. . . . .

There will never be real equality so long as one feels inferior or superior to the other. There is no room for patronage among equals. Mussulmans must not feel the lack of education or numbers where they are in a minority. Deficiency in education must be corrected by taking education. To be in a minority is often a blessing,

Superiority in numbers has frequently proved a hindrance. It is character that counts in the end. But I have not commenced this article to lay down counsels of perfection, or to state the course of conduct in the distant future.

Let us recognise that our Mussulman brethren have made great efforts to save the cow for the sake of their Hindu brethren. It would be a grave mistake to underrate them. But immediately we become assertive, we make all effort on their part nugatory. We have throughout all these many years put up with cow-slaughter either without a murmur or under ineffective and violent protest. We have never tried to deserve self-imposed restraint on the part of our Mussulman countrymen by going out of our way to cultivate friendly relations with them. We have more or less gratuitously assumed the impossibility of the task.

But we are now making a deliberate and conscious attempt in standing by their side in the hour of their needs. Let us not spoil the good effect by making our free offering a matter of bargain. Friendship can never be a contract. It is a status carrying no consideration with it. Service is a duty, and duty is a debt which it is a sin not to discharge. If we would prove our friendship, we must help our brethren whether they save the cow or not. We throw the responsibility for their conduct towards us on their own shoulders. We dare not dictate it to them as consideration for our help. Such help will be hired service, which the Mussulmans cannot be blamed if they summarily reject. I hope, therefore, that the Hindus of Bihar and indeed all the parts of India will realise the importance of observing the strictest forbearance no matter what the Mussulmans do on Bakr-Id. We must leave them to take what course they choose. What

Hakim Ajmal Khanji did in one hour at Amritsar, Hindus could not have done by years of effort. The cows that Messrs. Chotani and Khatri saved last Bakr-Id day, the Hindu millionaires of Bombay could not have saved if they had given the whole of their fortunes. The greater the pressure put upon the Mussulmans, the greater must be the slaughter of the cow. We must leave them to their own sense of honour and duty. And we shall have done the greatest service to the cow.

The way to save the cow is not to kill or quarrel with the Mussulman. The way to save the cow is to die in the act of saving the Khilafat without mentioning the cow. Cow protection is a process of purification. It is *tapasya*, i.e., self-suffering. When we suffer voluntarily and therefore without expectation of reward, the cry of suffering (one might say) literally ascends to heaven, and God above hears it and responds. That is the path of religion, and it has answered even if one man has adopted it in its entirety. I make bold to assert without fear of contradiction, that it is not Hinduism to kill a fellow-man even to save the cow. Hinduism requires its votaries to immolate themselves for the sake of their religion, i.e., for the sake of saving the cow. The question is how many Hindus are ready without bargaining with the Mussulmans to die for them and for their religion? If the Hindus can answer it in the religious spirit, they will not only have secured Mussulman friendship for eternity, but they will have saved the cow for all time from the Mussulmans. Let us not swear even by the greatest among them. They can but help. They cannot undertake to change the hearts of millions of men who have hitherto given no thought to the feeling of their Hindu neighbours when they slaughter the cow.

But God Almighty can in a moment change them and move them to pity. Prayer accompanied by adequate suffering is a prayer of the heart. That alone counts with God. To my Mussulman friends I would say but one word. They must not be irritated by the acts of irresponsible or ignorant but fanatical Hindus. He who exercises restraint under provocation wins the battle. Let them know and feel sure that responsible Hindus are not on their side in their trial in any bargaining spirit. They are helping because they know that the Khilafat is a just cause, and that to help them in a good cause is to serve India, for they are even as blood-brothers, born of the same mother—Bharata Mata.

## HINDU-MUSLIM TENSION

### ITS CAUSE AND CURE

Non-co-operation was at a low ebb during the absence of Mahatma Gandhi in prison, i.e. (March 1922 to February 1924). In spite of desperate attempts on the part of some Congressmen it seemed to have broken down. The leaders themselves could not see eye to eye with one another in many important matters. Some were for entering the Councils, and others swore by the Gandhian programme. But the worst of all troubles was the increasing tension between the Hindus and Mussulmans which seemed to grow in the months immediately after the release (February 1924). Gandhiji noted the disruption with pain. He wrote and spoke against this tendency with his wonted seriousness. But desecration of temples and general hooliganism followed by riots became intolerable. At such a time Gandhiji wrote a remarkable analysis of the Hindu-Muslim trouble, probing the disease to the core. His study of the "Hindu-Muslim Tension: Its Cause and Cure" appeared in *Young India* of the 29th May 1924.

### HINDU INDICTMENT

Pundit Banarsidas Chaturvedi brought a message from a Hindu residing in Tanganaika to the following effect: "Tell Gandhi he is responsible for the Muslim atrocities in Multan." I did not print the message before, as I was not ready to write then upon the question of questions. But many letters have since been received by me, some from well-known friends telling me that I was responsible even for the alleged Moplah atrocities, in fact for all the riots in which Hindus have or are said to have suffered since the Khilafat agitation. The argument is somewhat this: "You asked the Hindus to make common cause with the Mussulmans in the Khilafat question. Your being identified with it gave it an importance it would never have otherwise received. It unified and awakened the Mussulmans. It gave a prestige to the Maulvis which they never had before. And now that the Khilafat question is over, the awakened Mussulmans have proclaimed a kind of

*Jehad* against the Hindus." I have given the purport of the charge in readable language. Some letters contain unprintable abuse.

So much for the Hindu part of the indictment against me.

#### MUSSULMAN INDICTMENT.

A Mussulman friend says:

The Moslem community being a very simple and religious community were led to believe that the Khilafat was in danger and that it could be saved by the united voice of Hindus and Mahomedans; these innocent people believing your very eloquent words showed great enthusiasm with the result that they were the first to boycott schools, law courts, councils, etc. The most famous institution of Aligarh, which Sir Syed had built by the labour of his life-time, and which was justly the first institution of its kind, was utterly spoilt. I shall be very much obliged, if you will kindly point out that the Hindu community had a similar institution and it met with the same fate. I know of scores of boys who could have taken the University degree with credit to themselves and the community to which they belonged, but they were induced to leave studies on religious grounds, with the result that they were utterly ruined. On the contrary very few Hindu boys left, and those who did so for the time being instantly joined, as soon as they found that the movement was tottering to pieces. Similar was the case with lawyers. In those days, you brought about a sort of unity between the two communities and advertised it far and near that it was a solid one. The simple-minded Mahomedans again believed it with the result that they were brutally treated at Ajmere, Lucknow, Meerut, Agra, Saharanpur, Lahore and other places. Mr. Mahomed Ali, who was a born journalist of a very high type, and whose wonderful paper *The Comrade* was doing such solid work for the Muslim community, was won over to your side, and he is now a loss to the community. Your Hindu leaders in the guise of *Shuddhi* and *Sangathan* are trying to weaken the Muslim community. Your short-sighted decision to prevent people from entering the councils has acted most unfairly on this community, as the majority of able men refrained from entering the councils because of the so-called *fatwa*. Under the circumstances, do you not honestly think that you are doing a great harm to this community by keeping the Mahomedans, a few of them of course, still in your camp.

I have not given the whole of the letter. But the extract represents the gist of the Muslim indictment against me.



## NOT GUILTY

I must plead not guilty to both the charges, and add that I am totally unrepentant. Had I been a prophet and foreseen all that has happened, I should have still thrown myself into the Khilafat agitation. In spite of the present strained relations between the two communities, both have gained. The awakening among the masses was a necessary part of the training. It is itself a tremendous gain. I would do nothing to put the people to sleep again. Our wisdom consists now in directing the awakening in the proper channel. What we see before us is sad but not disheartening, if we have faith in ourselves. The storm is but the forerunner of the coming calm that comes from a consciousness of strength, not from the stupor of exhaustion and disappointment.

The public will not expect me to give judgment upon the riots in the different places. I have no desire for giving judgments. And even if I had, I have not the facts before me.

## MOPLAHS

I will say a word as to the causes.

The Malabar happenings undoubtedly disquieted the Hindu mind. What the truth is, no one knows. The Hindus say that the Moplah atrocities were indescribable. Dr. Mahmud tells me that these have been grossly exaggerated, that the Moplahs too had a grievance against the Hindus, and that he could find no case of 'forcible conversions'. The one case that was reported to him was at least 'non-proven'. In his findings, Dr. Mahmud says, he is supported by Hindu testimony. I merely mention the two versions to ask the public to conclude with me that it is impossible to arrive at the exact truth, and that it is unnecessary for the purpose of regulating our future conduct.

## MULTAN, ETC.

In Multan, Saharanpur, Agra, Ajmere, etc., it is agreed that the Hindus suffered most. In Palwal it is stated that Hindus have prevented Mussulmans from turning a *kachcha* mosque into a *pukka* one. They are said to have pulled down part of the *pukka* wall, driven the Muslims out of the village, and stated that the Muslims could not live in the village unless they promised not to build any mosque and say *azan*. This state of things is said to have continued for over a year. The driven Mussulmans are said to be living in temporary huts near Rohtak.

In Byade in Dharwar district, my informant tells me, on Muslims objecting to music being played before their mosque, the Hindus desecrated the mosque, beat the Mussulmans, and then got them persecuted.

Here again I cite these two instances, not as proved facts, but to show that the Mussulmans too claim to have much to complain of against Hindus.

And it can certainly be fairly added that where they were manifestly weak and Hindus strong as in Katarpur and Arrah years ago, they were mercilessly treated by their Hindu neighbours. The fact is that when blood boils, prejudice reigns supreme; man, whether he labels himself Hindu, Mussulman, Christian or what not, becomes a beast and acts as such.

## THE SEAT OF THE TROUBLE

The seat of the trouble however is in the Punjab. The Mussulmans complain that the Hindus have raised a storm of protest on Mr. Fazl Hussain trying very timidly to give a fair proportion of Government employment to Mussulmans. The letter, from which I have already quoted, complains bitterly that wherever a Hindu has been the

head of a department, he has carefully excluded Mussulmans from Government posts.

The causes for the tension are thus more than merely religious. The charges I have quoted are individual. But the mass mind is a reflection of individual opinion.

#### TIRED OF NON-VIOLENCE

The immediate cause is the most dangerous. The thinking portion seems to be tired of non-violence. It has not as yet understood my suspension of *Satyagrah* after Ahmedabad and Viramgam tragedies, then after the Bombay rowdyism, and lastly after the Chauri-Chaura outrage. The last was the last straw. The thinking men imagined that all hope of *Satyagrah*, and therefore of *Swaraj* too in the near future, was at an end. Their faith in non-violence was skin-deep. Two years ago a Mussulman friend said to me in all sincerity: "I do not believe your non-violence. At least I would not have my Mussulmans to learn it. Violence is the law of life. I would not have *Swaraj* by non-violence as you define the latter. I must hate my enemy." This friend is an honest man. I entertain great regard for him. Much the same has been reported of another very great Mussulman friend of mine. The report may be untrue, but the reporter himself is not an untrue man.

#### HINDU REPUGNANCE

Nor is this repugnance to non-violence confined to Mussulmans. Hindu friends have said the same thing, if possible, with greater vehemence. My claim to Hinduism has been rejected by some, because I believe and advocate non-violence in its extreme form. They say that I am a Christian in disguise. I have been even seriously told that I am distorting the meaning of the Gita, when I ascribe to that great poem the teaching of unadulterated

non-violence. Some of my Hindu friends tell me that killing is a duty enjoined by the Gita under certain circumstances. A very learned Shastri only the other day scornfully rejected my interpretation of the Gita and said that there was no warrant for the opinion held by some commentators that the Gita represented the eternal duel between forces of evil and good, and inculcated the duty of eradicating evil within us without hesitation, without tenderness.

I state these opinions against non-violence in detail, because it is necessary to understand them, if we would understand the solution I have to offer.

What I see around me to-day is, therefore, a reaction against the spread of non-violence. I feel the wave of violence coming. The Hindu-Muslim tension is an acute phase of this tiredness.

I must be dismissed out of consideration. My religion is a matter solely between my Maker and myself. If I am a Hindu, I cannot cease to be one even though I may be disowned by the whole of the Hindu population. I do however suggest that non-violence is the end of all religions.

#### LIMITED NON-VIOLENCE

But I have never presented to India that extreme form of non-violence, if only because I do not regard myself fit enough to re-deliver that ancient message. Though my intellect has fully understood and grasped it, it has not as yet become part of my whole being. My strength lies in my asking people to do nothing that I have not tried repeatedly in my own life. I am then asking my countrymen to-day to adopt non-violence as their final creed, only for the purpose of regulating the relations between the different races, and for the purpose of:

attaining *Swaraj*. Hindus and Mussulmans, Christians, Sikhs and Parsis must not settle their differences by resort to violence, and the means for the attainment of *Swaraj* must be non-violent. This I venture to place before India, not as a weapon of the weak, but of the strong. Hindus and Mussulmans prate about no compulsion in religion. What is it but compulsion, if Hindus will kill a Mussulman for saving a cow? It is like wanting to convert a Mussulman to Hinduism by force. And similarly what is it but compulsion, if Mussulmans seek to prevent by force Hindus from playing music before mosques? Virtue lies in being absorbed in one's prayers in the presence of din and noise. We shall both be voted irreligious savages by posterity if we continue to make a futile attempt to compel one another to respect our religious wishes. Again, a nation of three hundred million people should be ashamed to have to resort to force to bring to book one hundred thousand Englishmen. To convert them, or, if you will, even to drive them out of the country, we need, not force of arms, but force of will. If we have not the latter, we shall never get the former. If we develop the force of will, we shall find that we do not need the force of arms.

Acceptance of non-violence therefore, for the purposes mentioned by me, is the most natural and the most necessary condition of our national existence. It will teach us to husband our corporate physical strength for a better purpose, instead of dissipating it, as now, in a useless fratricidal strife, in which each party is exhausted after the effort. And every armed rebellion must be an insane act unless it is backed by the nation. But almost any item of non-co-operation fully backed by the nation can achieve the aim without shedding a single drop of blood.

I do not say 'eschew violence in your dealing with robbers or thieves or with nations that may invade India'. But in order that we are better able to do so, we must learn to restrain ourselves. It is a sign not of strength but of weakness to take up the pistol on the slightest pretext. Mutual fisticuffs are a training not in violence but in emasculation. My method of non-violence can never lead to loss of strength, but it alone will make it possible, if the nation wills it, to offer disciplined and concerted violence in time of danger.

#### NOT TRULY NON-VIOLENT

If those who believe that we were becoming supine and inert because of the training in non-violence, will but reflect a little, they will discover that we have never been non-violent in the only sense in which the word must be understood. Whilst we have refrained from causing actual physical hurt, we have harboured violence in our breast. If we had honestly regulated our thought and speech in the strictest harmony with our outward act we would never have experienced the fatigue we are doing. Had we been true to ourselves, we would have by this time evolved matchless strength of purpose and will.

I have dwelt at length upon the mistaken view of non-violence, because I am sure that if we can but revert to our faith, if we ever had any, in non-violence limited only to the two-purposes above referred to, the present tension between the two communities will largely subside. For, in my opinion, an attitude of non-violence in our mutual relations is an indispensable condition prior to a discussion of the remedies for the removal of the tension. It must be common cause between the two communities that neither party shall take the law into its own hands,

but that all points in dispute, wherever and whenever they arise, shall be decided by reference either to private arbitration, or to the law courts if they wish. This is the whole meaning of non-violence, so far as communal matters are concerned. To put it another way, just as we do not break one another's heads in respect of civil matters, so may we not do even in respect of religious matters. This is the only pact that is immediately necessary between the parties, and I am sure that everything else will follow.

#### THE BULLY AND THE COWARD

Unless this elementary condition is recognised, we have no atmosphere for considering the ways and means of removing misunderstanding and arriving at an honourable, lasting settlement. But, assuming that the acceptance of the elementary condition will be common cause between the two communities, let us consider the constant disturbing factors. There is no doubt in my mind that in the majority of quarrels the Hindus come out second best. My own experience but confirms the opinion that the Mussulman as a rule is a bully, and the Hindu as a rule is a coward. I have noticed this in railway trains, on public roads, and in the quarrels which I had the privilege of settling. Need the Hindu blame the Mussulman for his cowardice? Where there are cowards, there will always be bullies. They say that in Saharanpur, the Mussulmans looted houses, broke open safes and in one case a Hindu woman's modesty was outraged. Whose fault was this? Mussulmans can offer no defence for the execrable conduct, it is true. But I as a Hindu am more ashamed of Hindu cowardice than I am angry at the Mussulman bullying. Why did not the owners of the houses looted die in the attempt to defend their possessions? Where were the relatives of the

outraged sister at the time of the outrage? Have they no account to render of themselves? My non-violence does not admit of running away from danger and leaving dear ones unprotected. Between violence and cowardly flight, I can only prefer violence to cowardice. I can no more preach non-violence to a coward than I can tempt a blind man to enjoy healthy scenes. Non-violence is the summit of bravery. And in my own experience, I have had no difficulty in demonstrating to men trained in the school of violence the superiority of non-violence. As a coward, which I was for years, I harboured violence. I began to prize non-violence only when I began to shed cowardice. Those Hindus who ran away from the post of duty when it was attended with danger did so not because they were non-violent, or because they were afraid to strike, but because they were unwilling to die or even suffer any injury. A rabbit that runs away from the bull-terrier is not particularly non-violent. The poor thing trembles at the sight of the terrier and runs for very life. Those Hindus who ran away to save their lives would have been truly non-violent and would have covered themselves with glory and added lustre to their faith and won the friendship of their Mussulman assailants, if they had stood bare breast with smiles on their lips, and died at their post. They would have done less well though still well, if they had stood at their post and returned blow for blow. If the Hindus wish to convert the Mussulman bully into a respecting friend, they have to learn to die in the face of the heaviest odds.

#### THE WAY

The way however does not lie through *Akhadas*, not that I mind them. On the contrary, I want them for physical culture. Then they should be for all. But,



if they are meant as a preparation for self-defence in the Hindu-Mussulman conflicts, they are foredoomed to failure. Mussulmans can play the same game and such preparations, secret or open, do but cause suspicion and irritation. They can provide no present remedy. It is for the thoughtful few to make quarrels impossible by making arbitration popular and obligatory.

The remedy against cowardice is not physical culture but the braving of dangers. So long as parents of the middle class Hindus, themselves timid, continue to transmit their timidity by keeping their grown-up children in cotton-wool, so long will there be the desire to shun danger and run no risks. They will have to dare to leave their children alone, let them run risks and even at times get killed in so doing. The puniest individual may have a stout heart. The most muscular Zulus cower before English lads. Each village has to find out its stout hearts.

#### THE GOONDAS

It is a mistake to blame the goondas. They never do mischief unless we create an atmosphere for them. I was eyewitness to what happened in Bombay on the Prince's day in 1921. We sowed the seed and the goondas reaped the harvest. Our men were at their back. I have no hesitation in holding the respectable Mussulmans (not all in any single case) responsible for the misdeeds in Multan, Sahranpur and elsewhere as I have none in holding respectable Hindus responsible for the misdeeds in Katarpur and Arrah. If it is true that at Palwal we have prevented the erection of a *pukka* mosque in the place of a *kachcha* one, it is not the goondas who are doing it, it is the respectable Hindus

who must be held accountable. We must resolutely discountenance the practice of absolving the respectable class from blame.

Therefore I hold that Hindus will commit a grave blunder, if they organise Hindu goondas for defence. From the frying pan they will jump into fire. The Bania and the Brahmin must learn to defend himself even violently, if not non-violently, or surrender his womenfolk and possessions to the goondas. They are a class apart, whether they are labelled Mussulman or Hindu. It was said with gusto that protected by untouchables (for they feared not death) a Hindu procession (playing triumphant music) quite recently passed a mosque unhurt.

It is a very mundane use to make of a sacred cause. Such exploitation of our untouchable brothers can neither serve Hinduism in general nor the suppressed classes in particular. A few processions so doubtfully protected may pass a few mosques safely. But it can only aggravate the growing tension, and degrade Hinduism. The middle class people must be prepared for a beating, if they wish to play music in the teeth of opposition, or they must befriend Mussulmans in a self-respecting manner.

The Hindus have to do penance for the past and still continuing disabilities imposed by them upon the suppressed brothers. There can be no question therefore of expecting any return from them for a debt we owe them. If we use them to cover our cowardice, we shall raise in them false hopes we shall never be able to fulfil and if the retribution comes, it will be a just punishment for our inhuman treatment of them. If I have any influence with Hindus, I would beseech them not to use them as a shield against anticipated Mussulman attack.

## GROWING DISTRUST

Another potent cause of the tension is the growing distrust even among the best of us. I have been warned against Pundit Madan Mohan Malaviyaji. He is suspected of secret motives. It is said that he is no friend of the Mussulmans. He is even credited with being jealous of my influence. I have the privilege of knowing him intimately ever since my return to India in 1915. I have had the privilege of closest communion with him. I regard him as one of the best among Hindus, who though orthodox holds most liberal views. He is no enemy of Mussulmans. He is incapable of jealousy of any one. He has a heart large enough to accommodate even his enemies. He has never aimed at power. And what he has, is due to a long period of unbroken service of the Motherland, such as very few of us can boast. He and I are temperamentally different but love each other like brothers. There never has been even so much as a jar between us. Our ways being different, there can be no question of rivalry and therefore of jealousy either.

Another one distrusted is Lala Lajpatrai. I have found him to be frank as a child. His record of sacrifice is almost unequalled. I have had not one but many a chat on the Hindu-Muslim question with him. He is no enemy of the Mussulman. But I confess that he has his doubts about the immediate attainment of unity. He is seeking light from on High. He believes in that unity in spite of himself because, as he told me, he believes in *Swaraj*. He recognises that without that unity there can be no *Swaraj*. He only does not know how and when it can be attained. He likes my solution but he doubts if the Hindus will understand and appreciate its nobility (as he calls it). Let me say in passing I do not call my

solution noble. I hold it to be strictly just and the only feasible solution.

Swami Shraddhanandji is also distrusted. His speeches I know are often irritating. But even he wants Hindu-Muslim unity. Unfortunately he believes in the possibility of bringing every Muslim into the Aryan fold, just as perhaps most Mussulmans think that every non-Muslim will some day become a convert to Islam. Shraddhanandji is intrepid and brave. Single handed he turned a wilderness into a magnificent boarding college on the banks of the sacred Ganges. He has faith in himself and his mission. But he is hasty and easily ruffled. He inherits the traditions of the Arya Samaj. I have profound respect for Dayanand Saraswati. I think that he has rendered great service to Hinduism. His bravery was unquestioned. But he made his Hinduism narrow. I have read "Satyarth Prakash" the Arya Samaj Bible. Friends sent me three copies of it whilst I was resting in the Yerawada Jail. I have not read a more disappointing book from a reformer so great. He has claimed to stand for truth and nothing less. But he has unconsciously misrepresented Jainism, Islam, Christianity and Hinduism itself. One having even a cursory acquaintance with these faiths could easily discover the errors into which the great reformer was betrayed. He has tried to make narrow one of the most tolerant and liberal of the faiths on the face of the earth. And an iconoclast though he was, he has succeeded in enthroning idolatry in the subtlest form. For he has idolised the letter of the Vedas and tried to prove the existence in the Vedas of everything known to science. The Arya Samaj flourishes in my humble opinion not because of the inherent merit of the teachings of "Satyarth Prakash" but because of the grand and lofty character of the founder. Wherever

you find Arya Samajists, there is life and energy. But having the narrow outlook and a pugnacious habit they either quarrel with people of other denominations and failing them, with one another. Shraddhanandji has a fair share of that spirit. But, in spite of all these drawbacks, I do not regard him as past praying for. It is possible that this sketch of the Arya Samaj and the Swamiji will anger them. Needless to say, I mean no offence. I love the Samajists, for I have many co-workers from among them. And I learnt to love the Swamiji, even while I was in South Africa. And though I know him better now, I love him no less. It is my love that has spoken.

The last among the Hindus against whom I have been warned are Jeramdas and Dr. Choithram. I swear by Jeramdas. Truer men I have not had the honour of meeting. His conduct in the jail was the envy of us all. He was true to a fault. He is not anti-Mussulman. Dr. Choithram though I began to know him earlier I do not know so well. But from what I do know him, I decline to think of him as anything but a promoter of Hindu-Muslim unity. I have by no means exhausted the list. All I feel is that if all these Hindus and Samajists have still to be won over to the side of unity, the word unity has no meaning for me, and I should despair of achieving unity in my lifetime.

BARI SAHEB

"

But the suspicion against these friends is not its worst part. I have been warned against Mussulmans just as much as I have been warned against Hindus. Let me take only three names. Maulana Abdul Bari Saheb has been represented to me as an anti-Hindu fanatic. I have been shown some writings of his which I do not understand.

I have not even worried him about them. For he is a simple child of God. I have discovered no guile in him. He often speaks without thinking and often embarrasses his best friends. But he is as quick to apologise as he is ready to say things offensive. He means all he says for the time being. He is as sincere in his anger as he is in his apology. He once flared up at Maulana Mahomed Ali without just cause. I was then his guest. He thought he had said something offensive to me also. Maulana Mahomed Ali and I were just then leaving his place to entrain for Cawnpore. After our departure, he felt he had wronged us. He had certainly wronged Maulana Mahomed Ali, not me. But he sent a deputation to us at Cawnpore asking us to forgive him. He rose in my estimation by this act. I admit however that the Maulana Sahib can become a dangerous friend. But my point is that he is a friend. He does not say one thing and mean another. There are no mental reservations with him. I would trust such a friend with my life because I know that he will never stab me in the dark.

#### THE ALI BROTHERS

A similar warning has been given to me about the Ali Brothers, Maulana Shankat Ali is one of the bravest of men capable of immense sacrifice and equally capable of loving the meanest of God's creatures. He is passionately fond of Islam but he is no hater of other religions. Mahomed Ali is his brother's *alter ego*. I have not seen such implicit faithfulness to an elder brother as in Maulana Mohamed Ali. He has reasoned out for himself that there is no salvation for India without Hindu-Muslim unity. Their pan-Islamism is not anti-Hindu. Who shall quarrel with their intense desire to see Islam united against attack from without and purified from within? One passage

in Maulana Mahomed Ali's Cocanada address was pointed out to me as highly objectionable. I drew his attention to it. He immediately acknowledged that it was an error. Friends have told me there is something to object to even in Maulana Shaukat Ali's address to the Khilafat Conference. I have the address by me but I have not had time to study it. I know that if there is anything offensive in it, he is the man the readiest to make amends. The brothers are not faultless. Being full of faults myself, I have not hesitated to seek and cherish their friendship. If they have some faults, they have many virtues. And I love them in spite of their faults. Just as I cannot forsake the Hindu friends I have mentioned above and effectively work among Hindus for Hindu-Muslim unity, neither can I work to that end among the Mussulmans without the Mussulman friends, such as I have mentioned. If so many of us were perfect beings, there would be no quarrels. Imperfect as we are, we have to discover points of contact and with faith in God work away for the common end.

In order to purify the atmosphere of distrust of even the best of us, I had to deal with some of the principal characters. I may not have convinced the reader of the correctness of my estimate. Anyway it was necessary that he knew mine even if his was different from it.

#### ILLUSTRATION FROM SIND

The intense distrust makes it almost impossible to know the truth. I have received from Dr. Choithram the alleged facts of an attempted forcible conversion of a Hindu in Sindh. The man is said to have been done to death by his Mussulman companions because he will not accept Islam. The facts are ghastly if they are true. I straightway wired to Sheth Haji Abdulla Haroon inquiring

about the matter. He very kindly and promptly wired to say that it was reported to be a case of suicide but that he was making further inquiries. I hope that we shall succeed in knowing the truth about it. I simply point out the difficulty of work in the midst of suspicion. There is one other Sind incident which I hesitate to report till I have fuller and more authentic particulars. I simply beseech those who hear about any such incidents, whether against Hindus or Mussulmans, to keep themselves cool and pass on simply facts which can be sustained. I promise on my part to inquire into the most trifling of cases and do whatever is possible for a single individual to do. Before long I hope we shall have an army of workers whose one business will be to investigate all such complaints and do whatever is necessary to see the justice is satisfied and cases for future trouble are avoided.

#### FROM BENGAL

The tales that are reported from Bengal of outrages upon Hindu women are the most disquieting if they are even half true. It is difficult to understand the cause of the eruption of such crimes at the present moment. It is equally difficult to speak with restraint of the cowardice of Hindu protectors of these outraged sisters. Nor is it easy to characterise the lust of those who become so mad with it as to take liberties with innocent women. It is up to the local Mussulmans and the leading Mussulmans in general of Bengal to find out the miscreants, not necessarily with a view to getting them punished but with a view to preventing a recurrence of such crimes. It is easy enough to dig out a few criminals from their hiding places and hand them over to the police, but it does not protect society against the repetition of them. It is necessary to remove the causes by undertaking a thorough process of reform.



There must arise in Islam as well as in Hinduism men who being comparatively pure in character would work among such men. Much the same may be said of the Kabul terror. This has no bearing on the Hindu-Muslim tension. But we have to deal with such cases too if we are not to be helplessly relying purely upon the police.

#### SHUDDHI AND TABLIGH

That however which is keeping up the tension is the manner in which the *Shuddhi* or conversion movement is being conducted. In my opinion there is no such thing as proselytism in Hinduism as it is understood in Christianity or to a lesser extent in Islam. The Arya Samaj has, I think, copied the Christians in planning its propaganda. The modern method does not appeal to me. It has done more harm than good. Though regarded as a matter of the heart purely and one between the Maker and oneself, it has degenerated into an appeal to the selfish instinct. The Arya Samaj preacher is never so happy as when he is reviling other religions. My Hindu instinct tells me that all religions are more or less true. All proceed from the same God but all are imperfect because they have come down to us through imperfect human instrumentality. The real *Shuddhi* movement should consist in each one trying to arrive at perfection in his or her own faith. In such a plan character would be the only test. What is the use of crossing from one compartment to another, if it does not mean a moral rise? What is the meaning of my trying to convert to the service of God (for that must be the implication of *Shuddhi* or *Tabligh*) when those who are in my fold are every day denying God by their actions? "Physician heal thyself" is more true in matters religious than mundane. But these are my views. If the Arya Samajists think that they have a call from their conscience,

they have a perfect right to conduct the movement. Such a burning call recognises no time limit, no checks of experience. If Hindu-Muslim unity is endangered because an Arya Samaj preacher or a Mussulman preacher preaches his faith in obedience to a call from within, that unity is only skin-deep. Why should we be ruffled by such movements? Only they must be genuine. If the Malkanas wanted to return to the Hindu fold, they had a perfect right to do so whenever they liked. But no propaganda can be allowed which reviles other religions. For that would be negation of toleration. The best way of dealing with such propaganda is to publicly condemn it. Every movement attempts to put on the cloak of respectability. As soon as the public tear that cloak down, it dies for want of respectability. I am told that both Arya Samajists and Mussulmans virtually kidnap women and try to convert them. I have before me volumes of Aga Khani literature which I have not yet had the time to study carefully, but I am assured that it is a distortion of Hinduism. I have seen enough of it to know that it describes H. H. the Aga Khan as a Hindu *avatar*. It would be interesting to learn what the Aga Khan himself thinks of all this literature. I have many Kheja friends. I commend this literature to their attention. A gentleman told me that some agents of the Aga Khani movement lend money to poor illiterate Hindus and then tell them that the debt would be wiped out if the debtor would accept Islam. I would regard this as conversion by unlawful inducements. But the worst form is that preached by a gentleman of Delhi. I have read his pamphlet from cover to cover. It gives detailed instructions to preachers how to carry on propaganda. It starts with a lofty proposition that Islam is merely preaching of the unity of God. This grand

truth is to be preached, according to the writer, by every Mussulman irrespective of character. A secret department of spies is advocated whose one business is to be to pry into the privacy of non-Muslim households. Prostitutes, professional singers, mendicants, Government servants, lawyers, doctors, artisans are pressed into the service. If this kind of propaganda becomes popular, no Hindu household would be safe from the secret attention of disguised misinterpreters (I cannot call them missionaries) of the great message of the Prophet of Islam. I am told by respectable Hindus that this pamphlet is widely read in the Nizam's dominions and that the methods advocated in it are extensively practised in the Nizam's dominions.

As a Hindu I feel sorry that methods of such doubtful morality should have been seriously advocated by a gentleman who is a well known Urdu author and has a large circle of readers. My Mussulman friends tell me that no respectable Mussulman approves of the methods advocated. The point however is not what the respectable Mussulmans think. The point is whether a considerable number of Mussulman masses accept and follow them. A portion of the Punjab press is simply scurrilous. It is at times even filthy. I have gone through the torture of reading many extracts. These sheets are conducted by Arya Samajists or Hindu and Mussulman writers. Each vies with the other in using abusive language and reviling the religion of the opponent. These papers have, I understand, a fairly large circulation. They find place even in respectable reading rooms.

I have heard it said that the Government emissaries are at the back of this campaign of calumny. I hesitate to believe it. But even assuming the truth of it, the

public of the Punjab should be able to cope with the growing disgrace.

I think I have now examined all the causes, both original and continuing of the tension between the two communities. It is now time to examine the treatment of two constant causes of friction.

#### COW-SLAUGHTER

The first is cow slaughter. Though I regard cow protection as the central fact of Hinduism, central because it is common to classes as well as masses, I have never been able to understand the antipathy towards the Mussulmans on that score. We say nothing about the slaughter that daily takes place on behalf of Englishmen. Our anger becomes red-hot when a Mussulman slaughters a cow. All the riots that have taken place in the name of the cow have been an insane waste of efforts. They have not saved a single cow, but they have on the contrary stiffened the backs of the Mussulmans and resulted in more slaughter. I am satisfied that during 1921 more cows were saved through the voluntary and generous effort of the Mussulmans than through the Hindu effort during all the previous 20 years (say). Cow protection should commence with ourselves. In no part of the world perhaps are cattle worse treated than in India. I have wept to see Hindu drivers goading their jaded oxen with the iron points of their cruel sticks. The half-starved condition of the majority of our cattle are a disgrace to us. The cows find their necks under the butcher's knife because Hindus sell them. The only effective and honourable way is to befriend the Mussulmans and leave it to their honour to save the cow. Cow protection societies must turn their attention to the feeding of cattle,

prevention of cruelty, preservation of the fast disappearing pasture land, improving the breed of cattle, buying from poor shepherds and turning *pinjrapoles* into model self-supporting dairies. Hindus do sin against God and man when they omit to do any of the things I have described above. They commit no sin, if they cannot prevent cow slaughter at the hands of Mussulmans, and they do sin grievously when in order to save the cow, they quarrel with the Mussulman.

#### MUSIC

The question of music before mosques and now even *arati* in Hindu temples, has occupied my prayerful attention. This is a sore point with the Mussulmans as cow slaughter is with the Hindus. And just as Hindus cannot compel Mussulmans to refrain from killing cows, so can Mussulmans not compel Hindus to stop music or *arati* at the point of the sword. They must trust to the good sense of the Hindus. As a Hindu, I would certainly advise Hindus, without any bargaining spirit, to consult the sentiment of their Mussulman neighbour, and wherever they can, accommodate him. I have heard that in some places, Hindus purposely and with the deliberate intention of irritating Mussulmans, perform *arati* just when the Mussulman prayers commence. This is an insensate and unfriendly act. Friendship presupposes the utmost attention to the feelings of a friend. It never requires consideration. But Mussulmans should never expect to stop Hindu music by force. To yield to the threat or actual use of violence is a surrender of one's self-respect and religious conviction. But a person, who never will yield to threat, would always minimise and, if possible, even avoid occasions for causing irritation. .

## PACT

In view of what I have said above, it is clear that we have not even arrived at the stage when a pact is even a possibility. There can be, it is clear to me, no question of bargain about cow-slaughter and music. On either side it must be a voluntary effort and therefore can never be the basis of a pact.

For political matters a pact or an understanding is certainly necessary. But in my opinion the restoration of friendly feeling is a condition precedent to any effectual pact. Are both parties sincerely willing to accept the proposition that no disputes, religious or otherwise, between the communities should ever be decided by an appeal to force, *i.e.*, violence? I am convinced that the masses do not want to fight, if the leaders do not. If, therefore, the leaders agree that mutual vows should be, as in all advanced countries, erased out of our public life as being barbarous and irreligious, I have no doubt that the masses will quickly follow them.

So far as the political matters are concerned, as a non-co-operator I am quite uninterested in them; but for the future understanding I hold that it is up to the Hindus as the major party not to bargain but leave the pen in the hands of, say, Hakim Sahab Ajmal Khan and abide by his decision. I would similarly deal with the Sikhs, the Christians and the Parsis and be satisfied with the residue. It is, in my opinion, the only just, equitable, honourable and dignified solution. Hindus if they want unity among different races must have the courage to trust the minorities. Any other adjustment must have a nasty taste in the mouth. Surely the millions do not want to become legislators and municipal councillors. And if we have understood the proper use of *Satyagraha*, we should know

that it can be and should be used against an unjust administrator whether he be a Hindu, Mussulman or of any other race or denomination, whereas a just administrator or representative is always and equally good whether he be a Hindu or Mussulman. We want to do away with the communal spirit. The majority must therefore make the beginning and thus inspire the minorities with confidence in their *bona fides*. Adjustment is possible only when the more powerful take the initiative without waiting for response from the weaker.

So far as employment in the Government departments is concerned, I think it will be fatal to good government, if we introduce there the communal spirit. For administration to be efficient, it must always be in the hands of the fittest. There should be certainly no favouritism. But if we want five engineers we must not take one from each community but we must take the fittest five even if they were all Mussulmans or all Parsis. The lowest posts must, if need be, be filled by examination by an impartial board consisting of men belonging to different communities. But distribution of posts should never be according to the proportion of the numbers of each community. The educationally backward communities will have a right to receive favoured treatment in the matter of education at the hands of the national government. This can be secured in an effective manner. But those who aspire to occupy responsible posts in the government of the country, can only do so if they pass the required test.

#### TRUST BEGETS TRUST

For me the only question for immediate solution before the country is the Hindu-Mussulman question. I agree with Mr. Jinnah that Hindu-Muslim unity means

*Swaraj.* I see no way of achieving anything in this afflicted country without a lasting heart unity between Hindus and Mussulmans of India. I believe in the immediate possibility of achieving it, because it is so natural, so necessary for both and because I believe in human nature. Mussulmans may have much to answer for. I have come in closest touch with even what may be considered a "bad lot". I cannot recall a single occasion when I had to regret it. The Mussulmans are brave, they are generous and trusting, the moment their suspicion is disarmed. Hindus living as they do in glass houses have no right to throw stones at their Mussulman neighbours. See what we have done, are still doing, to the suppressed classes! If 'Kaffir' is a term of opprobrium, how much more so is 'Chandal'? In the history of the world religions, there is perhaps nothing like our treatment of the suppressed classes. The pity of it is that the treatment still continues. What a fight in Vaikom for a most elementary human right! God does not punish directly. His ways are inscrutable. Who knows that all our woes are not due to that one black sin? The history of Islam, if it betrays aberrations from the moral height, has many a brilliant page. In its glorious days it was not intolerant. It commanded the admiration of the world. When the West was sunk in darkness, a bright star rose in the Eastern firmament and gave light and comfort to a groaning world. Islam is not a false religion. Let Hindus study it reverently and they will love it even as I do. If it has become gross and fanatical here, let us admit that we have had no small share in making it so. If Hindus set their house in order, I have not a shadow of doubt that Islam will respond in a manner worthy of its past liberal traditions. The key to the situation lies with the Hindus. We must shed timidity or cowardice. We must be brave enough to trust, all will be well.



## HINDU-MUSLIM UNITY

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In spite of great endeavours on the part of the leaders, violence was increasing and Hindu-Muslim fracas became more and more frequent. The causes were surprisingly trivial, but the result was always tragic. One mischief followed another and what generally began as a street quarrel ended in a general revolt, followed by incendiarism and loot on a terrific scale.

Commenting on the desecration of two temples, one at Moradabad and the other at Amethi in Lucknow, Mahatma Gandhi pointed out in *Young India* of 21st August 1924 that "there is no doubt that those cases have an organisation at their back". Soon after a similar desecration occurring at Gulbarga, Mahatma Gandhi wrote strongly on "Gulbarga run mad".

Certain Mussulmans of Nagpur then ran amok and Hindu-Muslim revolt took a nasty turn. The Hindus though in a majority suffered terribly. A correspondent wrote to ask Mahatma Gandhi: "Should you not advise them to learn to teach the wrong-doers a salutary lesson?" Non-violence, he contended, was a mere cloak to hide their natural cowardice. "Must they not, develop the ability to defend themselves violently?" he asked. Mahatma Gandhi thereupon reverted to this question of questions in the *Young India* of 18th September 1924. He wrote in the course of his article:

"The way to get rid of the Hindu cowardice is for the educated portion to fight Goondas. We may use sticks and other clean weapons. My *Ahimsa* will allow the use of them. We shall be killed in the fight, but that will hearten both Hindus and Mussulmans. That would remove the Hindu cowardice in a moment. As things are going each party will be slaves of their own Goondas. That means the dominance of the military power. England fought for the predominance of the civil power and won and lived. Lord Curzon did much harm to us, but he was certainly brave and right when he stood out for the predominance of civil authority. When Rome passed into the hands of the soldiery, it fell. My whole soul rises against the very idea of the custody of my religion passing into the hands of the Goondas."

Surveying the situation in the light of these fracas, Mahatma Gandhi wrote the following important article in *Navjivan* which was translated for *Young India* by Mahadev Desai in September 1924 :

I had occasion whilst addressing a public meeting at Surat to refer to the question of Hindu-Muslim unity in detail, as some friends there wanted to know my views about *Sangathan*. After the meeting I had a letter from a Mussulman friend offering suggestions for the solution of the question. I now see that even Gujarat is not quite free from the dangers of communal disturbances. The Visnagar affair can hardly be said to be yet settled. There is some trouble in Mandal. There was fear of a little disturbance in Ahmedabad. Some trouble is apprehended in Umreth. Other parts (*e.g.*, Bhagalpur in Bihar) are also in the same plight.

The question of Hindu-Muslim unity is getting more and more serious every day. One thing should be made clear at the outset. In the case of many of these disturbances, we hear of Government agents being at the back of them. The allegation, if true, would be painful to me, not surprising. It should not be surprising if the Government fomented the troubles, it being their policy to divide us. It would be painful because of the necessary implication that neither of the communities realises wherein lies its interest. Only those can be set by the ears by a third party, who are in the habit of quarelling. Government has never been heard of having fomented a quarrel, say, between the Brahmans and Banias, nor amongst the Sunni Mussulmans. The suspicion or fear of their having set the Hindus and Mussulmans by the ears is always entertained, because both have quarrelled so often. It is this habit of quarelling that needs to be abandoned if we want to have *Sivraj* and retain it.

Quarrels must break out so long as the Hindus continue to be seized with fear. Bullies are always to be found where there are cowards. The Hindus must understand that no one can afford them protection, if they go on hugging fear. Fear of man argues want of faith in God. Only he trusts to his physical strength who has no faith or very little faith in God's omnipresence. The Hindu must cultivate either of these two—faith in God or faith in one's physical might. If he does neither, it will spell the ruin of the community.

The first, *viz.*, reliance on God and shaking off the fear of man is the way of non-violence and the best way. The second, *viz.*, reliance on one's physical might is the way of violence. Both have a place in the world. It is open to us to choose either. One man cannot try both at the same time. If all the Hindus and Mussulmans both elect the way of violence, we had better cease to talk of winning *Swaraj* in the immediate future. Armed peace means not a little fighting that will end with the breaking of a few heads or of a dozen temples. It must mean prolonged fighting and rivers of blood. I am against *Sangathan*, and I am not. If *Sangathan* means opening *akadas* and organising the Hindu hooligans through them, I would regard it as a pitiable condition. You cannot defend yourself and your religion with the help of hooligans. It is substituting one peril for another, and even adding another. I would have nothing to say against *akadas* if they were used by the Brahmans, Banias and others for the development of their physique. *Akadas* as *akadas* are unexceptionable. But I have no doubt that they are no good for giving a training to fight the Mussulmans. It will take years to acquire the physical strength to fight.

The *akada* is therefore not the way. We will have to go in for *tapasya*, for self-purification, if we want to win the hearts of Mussulmans. We shall have to cast off all the evil in us. If they attack us, we shall have to learn not to return blow for blow, but bravely to face death—not to die a craven death leaving wife and children behind, but to receive their blows and meet death cheerfully.

I would tender the same advice to the Mussulmans. But it is unnecessary, as the average Mussulman has been assumed to be a bully. The general impression is that the Mussulmans can fight and fight well. I do not, therefore, need to tell them how they should defend themselves from the attacks of the Hindus; on the contrary I have to appeal to them to forbear. I have to appeal to them to get the *goonda* element under control and to behave peaceably. The Mussulmans may regard the Hindus as a menace in other matters. They do regard them as an economic menace. They do dread the Hindus' interference with their religious rites on the Bakr-id day. But they are in no fear of being beaten by the Hindus. I will therefore tell them only this: "You cannot protect Islam with the *lathi* or the sword. The age of the *lathi* is gone. A religion will be tested by the purity of its adherents. If you leave it to the *goondas* to defend your youth, you will do serious harm to Islam. Islam will in that case no longer remain the faith of the *fakirs* and worshippers of Allah."

I have up to now confined myself to giving general advice. Maulana Hasrat Mohani told me that the Mussulmans ought to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, and Hindus should cease to regard the Mussulmans as untouchables, as he said they are regarded in North India. I told him: "I will not bargain with you.

in this matter. If the Mussulmans think it their duty to protect the cow for the sake of the Hindus, they may do so, irrespective of how the Hindus behave towards them. I think it a sin for a Hindu to look upon a Mussulman as an untouchable, and the Hindu ought not to do so, irrespective of a Mussulman killing or sparing the cow. The Mussulman ought to be no more untouchable to a Hindu than a Hindu of any of the four castes is to one of the other. I regard these things as axiomatic. If Hinduism teaches hatred of Islam or of non-Hindus, it is doomed to destruction. Each community should then put its house in order without bargaining with the other. To nurse enmity against the Mussulman, for the sake of saving the cow, is a sure way to kill the cow and doubly sinful. Hinduism will not be destroyed by a non-Hindu killing a cow. The Hindus' religion consists in saving the cow, but it can never be his religion to save the cow by a resort to force towards a non-Hindu. The Hindus want *Svaraj* in India, and not a Hindu *Raj*. Even if there was a Hindu *Raj*, and toleration one of its features, there would be place in it for Mussulmans as well as Christians; it would redound to the credit of Hinduism, if stopping of cow-slaughter was brought about not by force, but as a deliberate voluntary act of self-denial on the part of Mussulmans and others. I would therefore deem it unpatriotic even to nurse a dream of Hindu *Raj*."

Then there is the trouble about music. It is fast growing every day. A letter I had in Surat says that, as it is not obligatory on a Hindu to play music, he should stop it before mosques to spare the feelings of the Mussulmans. I wish the question was as simple as the correspondent thinks. But it is the opposite of simple. Not a single Hindu religious ceremony can be performed

without the accompaniment of music. Some ceremonies require the accompaniment of continuous music. No doubt, even here due regard ought to be had for the feelings of the Mussulmans. The music may in such cases be less noisy. But all this can be and ought to be done on the basis of 'give and take'. Having talked with a number of Mussulmans in the matter, I know that Islam does not make it obligatory for a Mussulman to prevent a non-Mussulman from playing music near mosques. Nor is such a thing on the part of a non-Mussulman calculated to injure Islam. Music should never, therefore, be a bone of contention.

In many places, however, the Mussulmans have forcibly sought to stop Hindus from playing music. This is clearly intolerable. What is readily yielded to courtesy is never yielded to force. Submission to a courteous request is religion, submission to force is irreligion. If the Hindus stop music for fear of a beating from the Mussulmans, they cease to be Hindus. The general rule in this respect may be said to be this, that where the Hindus have long been deliberately observing the custom to stop music before mosques, they must not break it. But where they have been playing music without interference, the practice should continue. Where trouble is apprehended and facts are disputed, both communities ought to refer the matter to arbitration.

Where a court of law has prohibited music, the Hindus should not take the law in their own hands. And the Mussulmans should not insist on stopping music by force.

Where the Mussulmans refuse to yield or where the Hindus apprehend violence, and where there is no prohibition by a court of law, the Hindus must take out their processions with music accompanying, and put up with all the beating inflicted on them. All those who join

such processions or who form the musical band must thus sacrifice themselves. They will thereby defend their Faith and their self-respect.

Where the Hindus are unequal to this soul-force, it is open to them to resort to force in self-defence. Where death without resistance is the only way, neither party should think of resorting to law courts or help from Government. Even if one of the parties resort to such aid, the other should refrain. If resort to law courts cannot be avoided, there ought to be at least no resort to false evidence. It is the rule of honourable combat that, after having heartily given and taken blows, both the parties quiet down, and seek no reinforcement from outside. There should be no bitterness or feeling of revenge behind.

A quarrel should in no case be carried from one street to another. The fair sex, the aged and the infirm, children and all non-combatants ought to be free from molestation. Fighting would be regarded as sportsman-like if these rules are observed. I hope that the Hindus and Mussulmans in Gujarat will keep their heads cool and keep the peace. I hope also that the fear of a possible trouble in Imreth is unjustified. Let both the communities there hold mutual consultations and settle their differences amicably.

Running away from fear of death, leaving one's dear ones, temples or music to take care of themselves, is irreligion, it is cowardice. It is not manly, it is unmanly. Non-violence is the virtue of the manly. The coward is innocent of it. It will take some time before the average Hindu ceases to be a coward and the average Mussulman ceases to be a bully. In the meantime, the thinking section of both the communities should try their best, on all occasions of trouble, to refer matters to arbitration. Their position is delicate, but they should expend all their energy in keeping the peace.

## THE GREAT FAST

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Finding that all his efforts at Hindu-Muslim Unity had failed, Mahatma Gandhi sought relief in fasting and prayer. Fasting for penance and praying for light have always been his last recourse in circumstances where no human agency could prevail. And so to the dismay of friends and the consternation of the whole public was announced the fast of twenty-one days from September 18 to 10th October 1924 during which the country watched his condition with anxious solicitude. Doubtless the announcement of the fast was the signal for the rally of many Hindu and Muslim leaders at Delhi for what was known as the Unity Conference which was among others attended by the Metropolitan Bishop of Calcutta, Dr. Foss Westcott. The leaders pledged themselves to do all they could to preserve peace. In the course of the great ordeal, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Young India* of 25th September 1924:

I wish to assure the reader that the fast\* has not been undertaken without deliberation. As a matter of fact my life has been a stake ever since the birth of non-co-operation. I did not blindly embark upon it. I had ample warning of the dangers attendant upon it. No act of mine is done without prayer. Man is a fallible being. He can never be sure of his steps. What

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\* Announcing a fast for 21 days, Mahatma Gandhi issued the following statement from Delhi on September 18, 1924:

The recent events have proved unbearable for me. My helplessness is still more unbearable. My religion teaches me that whenever there is distress which one cannot remove, one must fast and pray. I have done so in connection with my own dearest ones. Nothing evidently that I say or write can bring the two communities together. I am therefore imposing on myself a fast of 21 days commencing from to-day. I reserve the liberty to drink water with or without salt. It is both a penance and a prayer.

As penance I need not have taken the public into my confidence, but I publish the fast as (let me hope) an effective prayer both to Hindus and to Mussulmans, who have hitherto worked in unison, not to commit suicide. I respectfully invite the heads of all the communities, including Englishmen, to meet and end this quarrel which is a disgrace to religion and to humanity. It seems as if God has been dethroned. Let us reinstate Him in our hearts.



he may regard as answer to prayer may be an echo of his pride. For infallible guidance man has to have a perfectly innocent heart incapable of evil. I can lay no such claim. Mine is a struggling, striving, erring, imperfect soul. But I can rise only by experimenting upon myself and others. I believe in absolute oneness of God and therefore also of humanity. What though we have many bodies? We have but one soul. The rays of the sun are many through refraction. But they have the same source. I cannot therefore detach myself from the wickedest soul (nor may I be denied identity with the most virtuous). Whether therefore I will or no, I must involve in my experiment the whole of my kind. Nor can I do without experiment. Life is but an endless series of experiments.

I knew that non-co-operation was a dangerous experiment. Non-co-operation in itself is unnatural, vicious and sinful. But non-violent non-co-operation, I am convinced, is a sacred duty at times. I have proved it in many cases. But there was every possibility of mistake in its application to large masses. But desperate diseases call for desperate remedies. Non-violent non-co-operation was the only alternative to anarchy and worse. Since it was to be non-violent, I had to put my life in the scales.

The fact that Hindus and Mussulmans, who were only two years ago apparently working together as friends, are now fighting like cats and dogs in same places, shows conclusively that the non-co-operation they offered was not non-violent. I saw the symptoms in Bombay, Chauri Chaura and in a host of minor cases. I did penance then. It had its effect *pro tanto*. But this Hindu-Muslim tension was unthinkable. It became unbearable on hearing of the Kohat tragedy. On the eve of my departure from

Sabarmati for Delhi, Sarojini Devi wrote to me that speeches and homilies on peace would not do. I must find out an effective remedy. She was right in saddling the responsibility on me. Had I not been instrumental in bringing into being the vast energy of the people? I must find the remedy if the energy proved self-destructive. I wrote to say that I should find it only by plodding. Empty prayer is as sounding brass or tinkling cymbal. I little knew then that the remedy was to be this prolonged fast. And yet I know that the fast is not prolonged enough for quenching the agony of my soul. Have I erred, have I been impatient, have I compromised with evil? I may have done all these things or none of them. All I know is what I see before me. If real non-violence and truth had been practised by the people who are now fighting, the gory duelling that is now going on would have been impossible. My responsibility is clearly somewhere.

I was violently shaken by Amethi, Sambhal and Gulbarga. I had read the reports about Amethi and Sambhal prepared by Hindu and Mussulman friends. I had learnt the joint finding of Hindu and Mussulman friends who went to Gulbarga. I was writhing in deep pain and yet I had no remedy. The news of Kohat set the smouldering mass aflame. Something had got to be done. I passed two nights in restlessness and pain. On Wednesday I knew the remedy. I must do penance. In the Satyagraheshram at the time of morning prayer we ask Shiva, God of Mercy, to forgive our sins knowingly or unknowingly committed. My penance is the prayer of a bleeding heart for forgiveness for sins unwillingly committed.

It is a warning to the Hindus and Mussulmans who have professed to love me. If they have loved me truly and if I have been deserving of their love, they will do

penance with me for the grave sin of denying God in their hearts. To revile one another's religion, to make reckless statements, to utter untruth, to break the heads of innocent men, to desecrate temples or mosques, is a denial of God. The world is watching—some with glee and some with sorrow—the dog fight that is proceeding in our midst. We have listened to Satan. Religion—call it by what name you like—is made of sterner stuff. The penance of Hindus and Mussulmans is not fasting but retracing their steps. It is true penance for a Mussulman to harbour no ill-will for his Hindu brother and an equally true penance for a Hindu to harbour none for his Mussulman brother.

I ask of no Hindu or Mussulman to surrender an iota of his religious principle. Only let him be sure that it is religion. But I do ask of every Hindu and Mussulman not to fight for an earthly gain. I should be deeply hurt if my fast made either community surrender on a matter of principle. My fast is a matter between God and myself.

I did not consult friends—not even Hakim Sahab who was closeted with me for a long time on Wednesday—not Maulana Mahomed Ali under whose roof I am enjoying the privilege of hospitality. When a man wants to make up with his Maker, he does not consult a third party. He ought not to. If he has any doubt about it he certainly must. But I had no doubt in my mind about the necessity of my step. Friends would deem it their duty to prevent me from undertaking the fast. Such things are not matters for consultation or argument. They are matters of feeling. When Rama decided to fulfil his obligation, he did not swerve from his resolve either by the weepings and wailings of his dear mother or the advice of his preceptors, or the entreaty of his people, or even the certainty of his father's death if he

carried out his resolve. These things are momentary. Hinduism would not have been much of a religion, if Rama had not steeled his heart against every temptation. He knew that he had to pass through every travail, if he was to serve humanity and become a model for future generations.

But was it right for me to go through the fast under a Mussulman roof? (Gandhi was at the time the guest of Mr. Mahomed Ali at Delhi.) Yes, it was. The fast is not born out of ill-will against a single soul. My being under a Mussulman roof ensures it against any such interpretation. It is in the fitness of things that this fast should be taken up and completed in a Mussulman house.

And who is Mahomed Ali? Only two days before the fast we had a discussion about a private matter in which I told him what was mine was his and what was his was mine. Let me gratefully tell the public that I have never received warmer or better treatment than under Mahomed Ali's roof. Every want of mine is anticipated. The dominant thought of every one of his household is to make me and mine happy and comfortable. Doctors Ansari and Abdur Rahman have constituted themselves my medical advisers. They examine me daily. I have had many a happy occasion in my life. This is no less happy than the previous ones. Bread is not everything. I am experiencing here the richest love. It is more than bread for me.

It has been whispered that by going so much with Mussulman friends, I make myself unfit to know the Hindu mind. The Hindu mind is myself. Surely I do not live amidst Hindus to know the Hindu mind when every fibre of my being is Hindu. My Hinduism must be a very

poor thing if it cannot flourish under influences the most adverse. I know instinctively what is necessary for Hinduism. But I must labour to discover the Mussulman mind. The closer I come to the best of Mussulmans, the juster I am likely to be in my estimate of the Mussulmans and their doings. I am striving to become the best cement between the two communities. My longing is to be able to cement the two with my blood, if necessary. But, before I can do so, I must prove to the Mussulmans that I love them as well as I love the Hindus. My religion teaches me to love all equally. May God help me to do so! My fast among other things is meant to qualify me for achieving that equal and selfless love.

## THE UNITY CONFERENCE

The following Resolution was carried unanimously at the Unity Conference which met in Delhi at the time of the Mahatma's great fast in September 1921:

This Conference places on record its deep grief and concern at the fast which Mahatma Gandhi has undertaken.

The Conference is emphatically of opinion that the utmost freedom of conscience and religion is essential, and condemns any desecration of places of worship, to whatsoever faith they may belong, and any persecution or punishment of any person for adopting or reverting to any faith; and further condemns any attempts by compulsion to convert people to one's faith or to secure or enforce one's own religious observances at the cost of the rights of others.

The members of the Conference assure Mahatma Gandhi and pledge themselves to use their utmost endeavours to enforce these principles and to condemn any deviation from them even under provocation.

## THE INNER MEANING OF THE FAST

Mahadev Desai, Secretary to the Mahatma, records an interesting interview between Gandhiji and the Ali Brothers during the first week of the great fast in Delhi. In the course of the conversation Mr. Shaukat Ali counselled the Mahatma to go round the country and said pathetically : "This fast is hardly the way to fight the wrong." Thereupon the Mahatma is reported to have replied (*Young India*, 23rd October, 1924) :

"It is for me a pure matter of religion. I looked around me, and questioned myself, and found that I was powerless. What could I effect even by means of a long tour? The masses suspect us to-day. Pray do not believe that the Hindus in Delhi fully trust me. They were not unanimous in asking me to arbitrate. And naturally, there have been murders. How can I hope to be heard by those who have suffered? I would ask them to forgive those who have murdered their dearest ones. Who would listen to me? The Anjuman refuses to listen to Hakimji. When we were in the midst of negotiations about their arbitration I heard of Kohat. . . . .

That I should be a passive witness of all these, shows the depth of my incapacity. There are hundreds of sisters whose love and affection I still possess. They are in mortal fear to-day. To them I want to show by my own example the way to die.

Fight I do not mind if it be fair, honourable, brave fighting between the two communities. But to-day it is all a story of unmitigated cowardice. They would throw stones and run away, murder and run away, go to court, put up false witnesses and cite false evidence. What a woeful record? How am I to make them brave? You are trying your best. But I should also try my best. I must recover the power to react on them. . . .

If there is pride or defiance in me it is all over with me. Dear man, this fast is the result of several days' continued prayers. I have got up from sleep at 3 o'clock in the night and have asked Him what to do. On the 17th of September (1924) the answer came like a flash! If I have erred, He will forgive me. All I have done, all I am doing, is done in a fully God-fearing spirit, and in the house of a God-fearing Mussulman at that. My religion says that only he who is prepared to suffer can pray to God. Fasting and prayer are common injunctions in my religion. But I know of this sort of penance even in Islam. In the life of the Prophet I have read that the Prophet often fasted and prayed, and forbade others to copy him. Some one asked him why he did not allow others to do the thing he himself was doing. 'Because I live on food divine,' he said. He achieved most of his great things by fasting and prayer. I learnt from him that only he can fast who has inexhaustible faith in God. The Prophet had revelations not in moments of ease and luxurious living. He fasted and prayed, kept awake for nights together and would be on his feet at all hours of the night as he received the revelations. Even at this moment I see before me the picture of the Prophet thus fasting and praying. My dear Shaukat, I cannot bear the people accusing you and your brother of having broken your promises to me. I cannot bear the thought of such an accusation. I must die for it. This fast is but to purify myself, to strengthen myself. Let me not be misunderstood. I am speaking to you as though I was a Mussulman, because I have cultivated that respect for Islam, which you have for it. After I have fasted and prayed I shall be all the stronger, with all my reverence for Islam to appeal to both the communities. It is my own firm belief that the strength of the soul grows in proportion as you subdue the flesh. We have to fight hooliganism and we are not sufficiently spiritually strong to fight it."

## "MY REFUGE"

On the 9th October, 1924, the twentieth day of the great fast, the Mahatma wrote these words for *Young India* :

To-day is the twentieth day of my penance and prayer. Presently from the world of peace I shall enter the world of strife. The more I think of it the more helpless I feel. So many look to me to finish the work begun by the Unity Conference. So many expect me to bring together the political parties. I know that I can do nothing. God can do everything. O! God, make me Thy fit instrument and use me as Thou wilt.

Man is nothing. Napoleon planned much and found himself a prisoner in St. Helena. The mighty Kaiser aimed at the Crown of Europe and is reduced to the status of a private gentleman. God had so willed it. Let us contemplate such examples and be humble.

During these days of grace, privilege and peace, I have hummed to myself a hymn we often sing at the Satyagrahashram. It is so good that I cannot resist the pleasure of sharing a free rendering of it with the reader. The words of the hymn better express my state than anything else I can write.

Here they are :

My honour, O! God, is in Thy keeping ;  
Thou art ever my Refuge,  
For Thou art Protector of the weak,  
It is Thy promise to listen to the wall of sinners ;  
I am a sinner of old, help me

Thou to cross this ocean of darkness.  
It is Thine to remove the sin  
And the misery of Mankind.  
Be gracious to Tulsidas  
And make him Thy devotee.



## BREAKING THE FAST

Mr. Andrews has given a moving account of the breaking of the fast by Mahatma Gandhi. The Mahatma was surrounded by his friends and fellow-workers on the terrace of Mr. Mahomed Ali's house in Delhi on the last day of the fast on October 10, 1924. Before the actual breaking of the fast, writes Mr. Andrews, Mahatma Gandhi turned to Maulana Mahomed Ali, Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad : "He spoke to them ; and as he spoke his emotion was so deep that in his bodily weakness his voice could hardly be heard except by those who were nearest of all to him. He told them how, for thirty years Hindu-Muslim unity had been his chief concern, and he had not yet succeeded in achieving it. He did not know what was the will of God, but on this day he would beseech them to promise to lay down their lives if necessary for the cause. The Hindus must be able to offer their worship with perfect freedom in their temples and the Mussulmans be able to say their *azan* and prayers with perfect freedom in their mosques. If this elementary freedom of worship could not everywhere be secured, then neither Hinduism nor Islam had any meaning.

Hakim Ajmal Khan and Maulana Abul Kalam Azad renewed their solemn pledge and promise on behalf of the Mussulman community.

Then Dr. Ansari brought forward some orange juice and Mahatma Gandhi drank it. So the fast was broken. The joy and thankfulness of those who were present cannot adequately be described. Throughout it all, as congratulations poured in upon him, Mahatmaji remained unmoved, quietly resting. Soon the room was left empty. Mahatma Gandhi remained in silence and the great strain of the breaking of the fast was over."

# PERSONAL

## GOPAL KRISHNA GOKHALE

### I

The following is the speech delivered by Mahatma Gandhi, at Bangalore, in unveiling a portrait of Gokhale in May 1915 :

My Dear Countrymen,—I saw in the recitation, —the beautiful recitation that was given to me—that God is with them whose garment was dusty and tattered. My thoughts immediately went to the end of my garment ; I examined and found that it is not dusty and it is not tattered ; it is fairly spotless and clean. God is not in me. There are other conditions attached ; but in these conditions too I may fail ; and you, my dear countrymen, may also fail ; and if we do tend this well, we should not dishonour the memory of one whose portrait you have asked me to unveil this morning. I have declared myself his disciple in the political field and I love him as my *Raja Guru* ; and this I claim on behalf of the Indian people. It was in 1896 that I made this declaration, and I do not regret having made the choice.

Mr. Gokhale taught me that the dream of every Indian who claims to love his country, should be not to glorify in language but to spiritualise the political life of the country and the political institutions of the country. He inspired my life and is still inspiring ; and in that I wish to purify myself and spiritualise myself. I have dedicated myself to that ideal. I may fail, and to what extent I may fail, I call myself to that extent an unworthy disciple of my master.

What is the meaning of spiritualising the political life of the country? What is the meaning of spiritualising myself? That question has come before me often and often and to you it may seem one thing, to me it may seem another thing; it may mean different things to the different members of the Servants of India Society itself. It shows much difficulty and it shows the difficulties, of all those who want to love their country, who want to serve their country and who want to honour their country. I think the political life must be an echo of private life and that there cannot be any divorce between the two.

I was by the side of that saintly politician to the end of his life and I found no ego in him. I ask you, members of the Social Service League, if there is no ego in you. If he wanted to shine, if he wanted to shine in the political field of his country, he did so not in order that he might gain public applause, but in order that his country may gain. He developed every particular faculty in him, not in order to win the praise of the world for himself, but in order that his country might gain. He did not seek public applause, but it was showered upon him, it was thrust upon him; he wanted that his country might gain and that was his great inspiration.

There are many things for which India is blamed, very rightly, and if you should add one more to our failures the blame will descend not only on you but also on me for having participated in to-day's functions. But I have great faith in my countrymen.

You ask me to unveil this portrait to-day, and I will do so in all sincerity and that should be the end of your life.

## II

The following is the text of Mahatma Gandhi's speech in seconding the Resolution on Mr. Gokhale at the Fifteenth Bombay Provincial Conference, held at Poona on 10th and 11th July, 1915 :

Mr. President, Brothers and Sisters,—Perhaps it is impudent on my part to add anything to the feeling words that have been spoken by Mrs. Ranade. The fact that she is the widow of the master's master adds solemnity to the proceedings, which can only mar by any remarks I may make. But, claiming as I do to be one of Mr. Gokhale's disciples, you will forgive me if I say a few words which are personal tit-bits. It was on board the *S. S. Cronprinz* some years ago that I found myself in the master's company together with a common friend, Mr. Kallenbach, a German. (*Laughter.*) Let me say that all Germans are not fiends; nor are all German soldiers fiends. Mr. Kallenbach is a German and a soldier, but I feel that no purer-minded person to-day walks the earth in Europe than Mr. Kallenbach. (*Hear, hear.*) He was accepted as a worthy companion by Mr. Gokhale, who used to play with him the game of coits. Mr. Gokhale had just then, during the voyage from England to Capetown, picked up that game, and he very nearly gave Mr. Kallenbach a beating in the game. (*Laughter.*) I fancy that was a drawn game between them; and, let me add, Mr. Kallenbach, so far as I am aware, is one of the cleverest players of coits in South Africa. Just after that we had our meals at which Mr. Gokhale was talking to me with reference to the result of the game. He thought I never indulged in such sports and that I was against them. He expostulated with me in kind words and said : "Do you know why I want to enter into such competition with Europeans? I certainly want to do at least

as much as they can do, for the sake of our country. (*Hear, hear.*) It is said, rightly or wrongly, that we are inferior people in many matters, and "so far as I can do it"—and this he said in all humility—"I certainly want to show that we are at least their equals, if not their superiors." That was one incident. On board the same steamer we were engaged in a hot discussion in connection with our dear Motherland, and he was mapping out for me, as a father would for his child, a programme that I was to follow in India if I ever happened to see the Motherland again, and in connection therewith there was one thing he said: "We lack in India character; we want religious zeal in the political field." Shall we then follow the spirit of the master with the same thoroughness and the same religious zeal, so that we can safely teach a child politics? One of his missions in life, I think, was to inculcate the lesson that whatever we do, we should do with thoroughness. This it is not possible for us mortals to imitate in any degree of perfection. Whatever he did, he did with a religious zeal: that was the secret of his success. He did not wear his religion on his sleeves; he lived it. Whatever he touched, he purified; wherever he went, he recreated an atmosphere around him which was fragrant. When he came to South Africa he electrified the people there not only by his magnificent eloquence but by the sincerity of his character and by the religious devotion with which he worked. What was that devotion? Ailing though he was, he was awake the whole night practically when he was to have seen General Smuts; he did so in order to prepare the case for his countrymen with a thoroughness that surprised the Leader of the Boer Government. What was the result? The result was that he got the promise from the South African Government that the £3 tax would be gone in a few years, and the £3 tax is no more. (*Cheers.*)

### III

In unveiling the portrait of Gokhale at the Khalidina Hall, Karachi, on Tuesday the 29th February 1916, Mahatma Gandhi spoke as follows :

In Hyderabad, Sind, also, I was asked to unveil a portrait of Mr. Gokhale ; and there I put to myself and to those present a question which I put to myself and to you now. That question is : What right have I to unveil the portrait of Mr. Gokhale and what right have you to join in the ceremony ? Of course to unveil a portrait or to join in it is nothing great or important in itself. But the question really involved in the ceremony is important, *viz.*, are your hearts and is my heart in reality so much moved as to copy the glorious example of the great man ? The function will have no real significance unless we follow in his footsteps. And if we do follow him we shall be able to achieve a great deal. Of course it is not possible for all of us to achieve what Mr. Gokhale did in the Imperial Legislative Council. But the way in which he served the Motherland, the whole-hearted devotion with which he did it day and night without ceasing—all this it is in our power to do as the great one did. And I hope that when you leave this hall, you will bear in mind to follow him and thus give expression to your regard for him. You know that the best achievement of Mr. Gokhale according to himself was the establishment of the Servants of India Society. This great institution he has left behind him ; and it lies with us to support it and continue its noble work. It would be best if we could join the Society. But that will involve the question of our being fit for it. But if we are not in a position to join the Society, we can all do the next best thing, *viz.*, render pecuniary aid and swell the funds of the Society.

## LOKAMANYA TILAK

Addressing a huge concourse of people of all classes numbering over 50,000 assembled on the Beach opposite to the Presidency College, Madras, on the 12th August 1920, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the passing away of Lokamanya Tilak before outlaying his scheme of Non-Co-operation:

I wish to offer my tribute to the departed patriot and I think that I cannot do better than say that his death, as his life, has poured new vigour into the country. If you were present as I was present at that great funeral procession, you would realise with me the meaning of my words. Mr. Tilak lived for his country. The inspiration of his life was freedom for his country which he called *Swaraj*: the inspiration of his death-bed was also freedom for his country. And it was that which gave him such marvellous hold upon his countrymen; it was that which commanded the adoration not of a few chosen Indians belonging to the upper strata of society but of millions of his countrymen. His life was one long sustained piece of self-sacrifice. He began that life of discipline and self-sacrifice in 1879 and he continued that life up to the end of his day, and that was the secret of his hold upon his country. He not only knew what he wanted for his country but also how to live for his country and how to die for his country. I hope then that whatever I say this evening to this vast mass of people, will bear fruit in that same sacrifice for which the life of Lokamanya Tilak Maharaj stands. His life, if it teaches us anything whatsoever, teaches one supreme lesson: that if we want to do anything whatsoever for our country, we can do so not by speeches, however grand, eloquent and convincing they may be, but only by sacrifice at the back of every word and at the back of every act of our life.

Writing of him in *Young India* of 4th August 1920, Mahatma Gandhi described him as the Maker of Modern India:

Lokamanya Bal Gangadhar Tilak is no more. It is difficult to believe of him as dead. He was so much part of the people. No man of our times had the hold on the masses that Mr. Tilak had. The devotion that he commanded from thousands of his countrymen was extraordinary. He was unquestionably the idol of his people. His word was law among thousands. A giant among men has fallen. The voice of the lion is hushed.

What was the reason for his hold upon his countrymen? I think the answer is simple. His patriotism was a passion with him. He knew no religion but love of his country. He was a born democrat. He believed in the rule of majority with an intensity that fairly frightened me. But that gave him his hold. He had an iron will which he used for his country. His life was an open book. His tastes were simple. His private life was spotlessly clean. He had dedicated his wonderful talents to his country. No man preached the gospel of the *Swaraj* with the consistency and the insistence of Lokamanya. His countrymen, therefore, implicitly believed in him. His courage never failed him. His optimism was irrepressible. He had hoped to see *Swaraj* fully established during his life-time. If he failed, it was not his fault. He certainly brought it nearer by many a year. It is for us, who remain behind, to put forth redoubled effort to make it a reality in the shortest possible time.

Lokamanya was an implacable foe of the bureaucracy, but this is not to say that he was a hater of Englishmen or English rule. I warn Englishmen against making the mistake of thinking that he was their enemy.



I had the privilege of listening to an impromptu, learned discourse by him, at the time of the last Calcutta Congress on Hindi being the national language. He had just returned from the Congress pandal. It was a treat to listen to his calm discourse on Hindi. In the course of his address, he paid a glowing tribute to the English for their care of the Vernaculars. His English visit, in spite of his sad experience of English juries, made him a staunch believer in British democracy and he even seriously made the amazing suggestion that India should instruct it on the Punjab through the cinematograph. I relate this incident not because I share his belief (for I do not), but in order to show that he entertained no hatred for Englishmen. But he could not and would not put up with an inferior status of India and the Empire. He wanted immediate equality which he believed was his country's birthright. And in his struggle for India's freedom, he did not spare the Government. In the battle for freedom, he gave no quarter and asked for none. I hope that Englishmen will recognise the worth of the man whom India has adored.

For us, he will go down to the generations yet unborn as a Maker of Modern India. They will revere his memory as of a man who lived for them and died for them. It is blasphemy to talk of such a man as dead. The permanent essence of him abides with us for ever. Let us erect for the only Lokamanya of India an imperishable monument by weaving into our own lives his bravery, his simplicity, his wonderful industry and his love of his country. May God grant his soul peace!

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## GOKHALE, TILAK AND MEHTA

In the following article in *Young India* of July 13, 1921, Mahatma Gandhi brings out the leading traits of the character of the three great men with whom he came in contact early in his public career :

A strange anonymous letter has been received by me, admiring me for having taken up a cause that was dearest to Lokamanya's heart, and telling me that his spirit was residing in me and that I must prove a worthy follower of his. The letter, moreover, admonishes me not to lose heart in the prosecution of the *Swaraj* programme, and finishes off by accusing me of imposture in claiming to be politically a disciple of Gokhale. I wish correspondents will throw off the slavish habit of writing anonymously. We, who are developing the *Swaraj* spirit, must cultivate the courage of fearlessly speaking out our mind. The subject-matter of the letter, however, being of public importance, demands a reply. I cannot claim the honour of being a follower of the late Lokamanya. I admire him like millions of his countrymen for his indomitable will, his vast learning, his love of country, and, above all, the purity of his private life and great sacrifice. Of all the men of modern times, he captivated most the imagination of his people. He breathed into us the spirit of *Swaraj*. No one perhaps realised the evil of the existing system of Government as Mr. Tilak did. And in all humility I claim to deliver his message to the country as truly as the best of his disciples. But I am conscious that my method is not Mr. Tilak's methods and that is why I have still difficulty with some of the Maharashtra leaders. But I sincerely think that Mr. Tilak did not disbelieve in my method. I enjoyed the privilege of his confidence. And his last word to me in the presence of several friends

was, just a fortnight before his death, that mine was an excellent method if the people could be persuaded to take to it. But he said he had doubts. I know no other method. I can only hope that when the final test comes, the country will be proved to have assimilated the method of non-violent non-co-operation. Nor am I unaware of my other limitations. I can lay no claim to scholarship. I have not his powers of organisation, I have no compact disciplined party to lead, and, having been an exile for 23 years, I cannot claim the experience that the Lokamanya had of India. Two things we had in common to the fullest measure : Love of country and the steady pursuit of *Swaraj*. I can, therefore, assure the anonymous writer, that yielding to none in my reverence for the memory of the deceased, I will march side by side with the foremost of the Lokamanya's disciples in the pursuit of *Swaraj*. I know that the only offering acceptable to him is the quickest attainment of *Swaraj* by India. That and nothing else can give his spirit peace.

Discipleship, however, is a sacred personal matter. I fell at Dadabhai's feet in 1888, but he seemed to be too far away from me. I could be as son to him, not disciple. A disciple is more than a son. Discipleship is a second birth. It is a voluntary surrender. In 1896 I met almost all the known leaders of India in connection with my South African mission. Justice Ranade awed me. I could hardly talk in his presence. Badruddin Tayabji fathered me, and asked me to be guided by Ranade and Pherozeshah. The latter became a patron. His will had to be law. 'You must address a public meeting on the 26th September, and you must be punctual.' I obeyed. On the 25th evening I was to wait on him. I did.

‘Have you written out your speech?’ he inquired.

‘No, Sir.’

‘That won’t do, young man. Can you write it out to-night?’

‘Munshi, you must go to Mr. Gandhi and receive the manuscript from him. It must be printed over-night and you must send me a copy.’ Turning to me, he added: ‘Gandhi, you must not write a long speech, you do not know Bombay audiences cannot stand long addresses.’ I bowed.

The lion of Bombay taught me to take orders. He did not make me his disciple. He did not even try.

I went thence to Poona. I was an utter stranger. My host first took me to Mr. Tilak. I met him surrounded by his companions. He listened, and said: ‘We must arrange a meeting for you. But perhaps you do not know, that we have unfortunately two parties. You must give us a non-party man as chairman. Will you see Dr. Bhandarkar?’ I consented and retired. I have no firm impression of Mr. Tilak, except to recall that he shook off my nervousness by his affectionate familiarity. I went thence, I think, to Gokhale, and then to Dr. Bhandarkar. The latter greeted me, as a teacher of his pupil.

‘You seem to be an earnest and enthusiastic young man. Many people do not come to see me at this the hottest part of the day. I never now-a-days attend public meetings. But you have recited such a pathetic story that I must make an exception in your favour.’

I worshipped the venerable doctor with his wise face. But I could not find for him a place on that little throne. It was still unoccupied. I had many heroes but no king.

It was different with Gokhale. I cannot say why I met him at his quarters on the college ground. It was like meeting an old friend, or better still, a mother after a long separation. His gentle face put me at ease in a moment. His minute inquiries about myself and my doings in South Africa at once enshrined him in my heart. And as I parted from him, I said to myself: 'You are my man.' And from that moment Gokhale never lost sight of me. In 1901 on my second return from South Africa, we came closer still. He simply 'took me in hand,' and began to fashion me. He was concerned about how I spoke, dressed, walked and ate. My mother was not more solicitous about me than Gokhale. There was so far as I am aware, no reserve between us. It was, really a case of love at first sight, and it stood the severest strain in 1913. He seemed to me all I wanted as a political worker—pure as crystal, gentle as a lamb, brave as a lion and chivalrous to a fault. It does not matter to me that he may not have been any of these things. It was enough for me, that I could discover no fault in him to cavil at. He was and remains for me the most perfect man on the political field. Not therefore, that we had no differences. We differed even in 1901 in our views on social customs, *e.g.*, widow re-marriage. We discovered differences in our estimate of Western civilization. He frankly differed from me in my extreme views on non-violence. But these differences mattered neither to him nor to me. Nothing could put us asunder. It were blasphemous to conjecture what would have happened if he were alive to-day. I know that I would have been working under him. I have made this confession, because the anonymous letter hurt me, when it accused me of imposture about my political discipleship. Had I been remiss in my acknowledgment to him who is now dumb? I thought, I must declare my faithfulness to Gokhale, especially when I seemed to be living in a camp which the Indian world calls opposite.

## CHITTA RANJAN DAS

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Soon after the death of Chitta Ranjan Das, Mahatma Gandhi delivered a speech at Khulna on June 17, 1925, in the course of which he said :

Mr. Das was one of the greatest of men. (Here Gandhiji broke down and could not proceed for a minute or two.) I have had the privilege of knowing him for the last six years and when I parted from him only a few days ago at Darjeeling, I said to a friend that the closer I came to him the more I came to love him. I saw during my brief stay at Darjeeling that no thought but that of the welfare of India occupied his mind. He dreamed and thought and talked of the freedom of India and of nothing else and I may tell you that until the moment I took leave of him in Darjeeling, he was asking me to stop longer in Bengal to bring the different parties together, so that the energies of all may be concentrated on one purpose throughout my tour in Bengal.

Those who had differences with him, those who bitterly criticised him, did not hesitate to admit that no other man could take his place in Bengal. He was fearless. He was brave. His love for the young men of Bengal was boundless. There is not a young man but has told me that never had his request to Mr. Das for help gone in vain. He earned lakhs and gave away lakhs to the young men of Bengal. His sacrifice was matchless, and who am I to talk of his great intellect and his statesmanship ?

On more than one occasion at Darjeeling, he told me that the freedom of India depends on non-violence and truth. The Hindus and Mussulmans of India should know

that his heart knew no differences between the Hindus and the Mussulmans. I would like to tell all Englishmen in India that he bore no ill-will to them. "If I live I live for *Swaraj*; if I die I die for *Swaraj*," that was his vow to his Motherland.

During my stay at Darjeeling I could see that Mr. Das's tenderness towards his political opponents was every day increasing, but I must not attempt to describe those sacred memories. Mr. Das was one of the jewels among the servants of the country. His service and his sacrifice were matchless. May their memory ever remain with us and may his example inspire us to noble efforts! Our way is long and dreary and nothing will stand us in good stead as our own reliance on ourselves. Self-reliance was Mr. Das's watchword and may it long inspire us! May his soul rest in peace!

Writing in *Young India* of June 25, 1935, Mahatma Gandhi recalled the Khulna Memorial Meeting and added :

A giant among men has fallen. Bengal is like a widow to-day. A critic of the Deshabandhu remarked to me some weeks ago: "I find fault with him, it is true, but must candidly confess to you that we have absolutely no one to replace him." When I related the anecdote at the meeting at Khulna where I first heard the stunning news, Acharya Ray exclaimed: "It is but too true. If I could tell who can take Rabindranath's place as a poet, I could tell you who can take Deshabandhu's as a leader. There is no man in Bengal even anywhere near Deshabandhu." He was a hero of a hundred battles. He was generous to a fault. Though he earned lakhs of rupees from his practice, he never permitted himself to be rich. And he even gave up the mansion he had.

## PRINCIPAL RUDRA

On the death of Principal Rudra on June 30, 1926, Mahatma Gandhi wrote the following in *Young India* :

India whose chief disease is her political servitude recognises only those who are fighting publicly to remove it by giving battle to a bureaucracy that has protected itself with a treble line of entrenchment—army and navy, money and diplomacy. She naturally does not know her selfless and self-effacing workers in other walks of life, no less useful than the purely political. Such a humble worker was Sushil Rudra, late Principal of St. Stephens College. He was a first class educationist. As principal, he had made himself universally popular. There was a kind of spiritual bond between him and his pupils. Though he was a Christian, he had room in his bosom for Hinduism and Islam which he regarded with great veneration. His was not an exclusive Christianity that condemned to perdition every one who did not believe in Jesus Christ as the only saviour of the world. Jealous of the reputation of his own he was tolerant towards the other faiths. He was a keen and careful student of politics. Of his sympathies with the so-called extremists, if he made no parade, he never made any secret either. Ever since my return home in 1915, I had been his guest whenever I had occasion to go to Delhi. It was plain sailing enough so long as I had not declared *Satyagraha* in respect of the Rowlatt Act. He had many English friends in the higher circles. He belonged to a purely English Mission. He was the first Indian Principal chosen in his college. I, therefore, felt that his intimate association with me and his giving me shelter under his roof might compromise him and expose his college to unnecessary risk. I, therefore, offered to seek shelter



elsewhere. His reply was characteristic: 'My religion is deeper than people may imagine. Some of my opinions are vital parts of my being. They are formed after deep and prolonged prayers. They are known to my English friends. I cannot possibly be misunderstood by keeping you under my roof as an honoured friend and guest. And if ever I have to make a choice between losing what influence I may have among Englishmen and losing you, I know what I would choose. You cannot leave me.' 'But what about all kinds of friends who come to see me? Surely, you must not let your house become a caravansarai when I am in Delhi,' I said. 'To tell you the truth,' he replied, 'I like it all. I like the friends who come to see you. It gives me pleasure to think that in keeping you with me, I am doing some little service to my country.' The reader may not be aware that my open letter to the Viceroy giving concrete shape to the Khilafat claim was conceived and drafted under Principal Rudra's roof. He and Charlie Andrews were my revisionists. Non-cooperation was conceived and hatched under his hospitable roof. He was a silent but deeply interested spectator at the private conference that took place between the Maulanas, other Mussulman friends and myself. Religious motive was the foundation for all his acts. There was, therefore, no fear of temporal power, though the same motive also enabled him to value the existence and the use and the friendship of temporal power. He exemplified in his life the truth that religious perception gives one a correct sense of proportion resulting in a beautiful harmony between action and belief. Principal Rudra drew to himself as fine characters as one could possibly wish for. Not many people know that we owe C. F. Andrews to Principal Rudra. They were twins. Their relationship was a study in ideal friendship.

## DWIJENDRANATH TAGORE

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On hearing of the death of Borodada otherwise known as Dwijendranath Tagore, Gandhiji penned the following note in *Young India* of 26th November, 1925 :

It is difficult to believe that Dwijendranath Tagore is no more. A wire from Shantiniketan gives me the sad news that Borodada known as Dwijendranath Tagore has found his rest. He was nearing 90 and yet he was so bright, so cheerful that one could never feel whilst in his presence that his days of earthly existence were numbered. Borodada was a distinguished member in that family of geniuses. Besides being a great scholar—as familiar with Sanskrit as he was with English—Borodada was a deeply religious man of broad sympathies. Whilst he held tenaciously to the teachings of the Upanishads, he was open to receive light from all the other scriptures of the world. He loved his country with the passion of a most devoted patriot. Yet his patriotism was not exclusive. He understood the spiritual beauty of non-violent non-cooperation, though he never failed to appreciate its political significance. He believed in the spinning wheel with a full heart and had adopted *khaddar* even at his ripe age. He kept himself in closest touch with the current events with the ardour of a youth. Borodada's death means the withdrawal of a great sage, philosopher, and patriot from our midst. I tender my condolences to the Poet and the members of the Ashram at Shantiniketan.

## SWAMI SHRADDANANDA

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Soon after the passing away of Swami Shraddananda under tragic circumstances, Mahatma Gandhi described the Swamiji as he knew him :

My first acquaintance with Swamiji was when he was Mahatma Munshiram and that by letter. He was then Governor of Kangdi Gurukul, his great original contribution to education. He was not satisfied with the orthodox Western method. He wanted his boys to be saturated with Vedic teaching, and he taught through Hindi, not English. He wanted them to be and remain *brahmacharis* during their training. He had inspired his boys to contribute to the fund that was then being collected for the *Satyagrahis* of South Africa. And he wanted them to do so by themselves labouring as coolies for hire ; for was it not a coolies' fight in South Africa ? The boys rose to the occasion, earned full wages and sent them to me. The letter he wrote to me about this incident was written in Hindi. I was addressed as 'my dear brother'. It endeared me to Mahatma Munshiram, we had never met each other before.

Andrews was the link between us. He was anxious that whenever I returned home, I should make the acquaintance of what I used to call his trinity—the Poet, Principal Rudra, and Mahatma Munshiram.

From the time of the receipt of that letter, we became brothers in arms. We met each other in 1915 at his favourite Gurukul and with each meeting we came closer and knew each other better. His love of ancient India, Sanskrit and Hindi was remarkable. He was undoubtedly a non-co-operator before non-co-operation was born. He was impatient to gain *Swaraj*. He hated untouchability and was anxious to raise the status of the 'untouchables'. He could not brook any restriction upon their freedom. . . .

Speaking at the Congress of 1926, Mahatma Gandhi referred to the Swamiji as a hero among heroes. The speech was in Hindi and the following rendering is taken from the *Young India* of January 13, 1927:

Swamiji was hero among heroes, the bravest of the brave. He had astonished the nation with an unbroken record of bravery. I am witness of the pledge he had taken to sacrifice himself at the altar of the country.

But need any one speak at length on the Swamiji's services to the nation? Swamiji, as every one knew, was the help of the helpless, the friend of the weak and the oppressed, and the work he had done for the untouchables was unsurpassed. I well remember his having told me once that unless every Hindu member of the All-India Congress Committee had an 'untouchable' servant in his home, the work of the Congress for the uplift of the untouchables would not be complete. This may sound as an impracticable proposal, but it shows his unbounded love for the untouchables.

I shall not refer here to his many other services. Whilst the assassination of such a great hero and patriot, such a servant and devotee of God as the Swamiji can be made to serve the country's cause, imperfect men as we are, it is natural for us to mourn over his sad death. And when one thinks of the circumstances under which he met his death, one is naturally filled with horror and indignation. The assassin sought an interview with the Swamiji to have a discussion on Islam. His faithful servant refused to admit him as he had Dr. Ansari's orders to allow no interviews so long as Swamiji was seriously ailing. But God had evidently ordered otherwise. Swamiji, when he overheard the request, asked Dharmasingh to let the man in. Brother Abdul Rashid was shown in. I purposely call him brother, and if we are true Hindus you will understand

why I call him so. Swamiji asked his servant to admit Abdul Rashid, because God had willed to show there-through the greatness of Swamiji and the glory of Hinduism. Swamiji was of course too ill to discuss religious topics and he asked the stranger to seek another occasion. But he would not go. He said he was thirsty and asked for water. Swamiji asked Dharmasingh to fetch water for him and taking the advantage of his absence, the man deposited bullet shots in Swamiji's breast.

This is a thing which should not have happened in India—India, where both Hindus and Mussulmans are proud of their faiths.

I therefore appeal to you that if you hold dear the memory of Swami Shraddhanandji you would help in purging the atmosphere of mutual hatred and calumny, you would help in boycotting papers which foment hatred and spread misrepresentation. I am sure that India would lose nothing if 90 per cent. of the papers were to cease to-day. Many Mussulman papers to-day subsist on hatred of the Hindu, and many Hindu papers subsist on hatred of the Mussulman. Swamiji has left for us a rich lesson written in his blood. 'Do you know the liberality of the Arya Samaj?' he once asked me. 'Do you know how Maharshi Dayanand forgave the man who poisoned him?' I knew it. How could I be ignorant of it, knowing as I did that the Maharshi had before him the example of Yudhishtira and the teaching of the Gita and the Upanishads? But Shraddhanandji in his overflowing reverence for the Maharshi dilated upon his forgiveness. I tell you the disciple had no less of that noble quality than his great master.

## DR. ANSARI

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Commending the choice of Dr. Ansari for the presidency of the Madras Congress of 1927, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in *Young India* of July 21, 1927, that "there is no one on the national horizon to challenge the election".

Dr. Ansari is as good an Indian as he is a Mussulman. He has been never suspected of fanaticism. He has been continuously Joint Secretary of the Congress for years. His recent efforts to promote union are well known. And as a matter of fact, had I not stood in the way at Belgaum, Shrimati Sarojini Devi at Cawnpur and Sjt. Srinivas Iyeogar at Gauhati, Dr. Ansari would have been elected on any of these occasions. For his name was on everybody's lips when these elections took place. But special reasons postponed Dr. Ansari's claim, and it now seems, that Fates had conspired to postpone the election so that he might come in when he was most wanted. If any possible scheme of Hindu-Muslim unity is to be found acceptable to both the parties, Dr. Ansari undoubtedly is the man to pilot such a scheme through the Congress. I respectfully dissent from the view, that in a Congress which is predominantly Hindu, a Hindu should be the President, so that such a scheme might be claimed to have whole-hearted acceptance by the Hindus. On the contrary, nothing can be more auspicious for the inauguration of such a scheme than that, in spite of the poisonous atmosphere prevailing in the country, a national association containing a preponderating majority of Hindus should unanimously and whole-heartedly elect a Mussulman.

as its President. That fact by itself would be an earnest of the Hindu desire for such unity. And of all the Mussulman nationalists, there is no Mussulman more respected than Dr. Ansari by the Mussulmans in general. It is therefore, in my opinion, in every way desirable, that Dr. Ansari should guide the National Congress during the coming year. For it is not merely the passing of a scheme that is wanted, but a proper working of it is, perhaps, more necessary than its acceptance by the two parties. And assuming that a scheme acceptable to both is passed, ceaseless watch will be required during the coming year as to its operation. Dr. Ansari is the most fitted for this work. I hope, therefore, that all the provinces will unanimously recommend Dr. Ansari's name for the highest honour that is in the gift of the National Assembly.

Commenting later on the Presidential Address and Dr. Ansari's impassioned plea for unity, Mahatma Gandhi wrote :

The special feature of Dr. Ansari's speech was its intense hunger for unity. He knew that he was expected to bring it about. And if any single person could do it, it was certainly Dr. Ansari. He accepted the highest honour in the gift of the nation because he had confidence in the nation, the cause and himself. He certainly left no stone unturned to achieve his ambition.

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## HAKIM AJMAL KHAN

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Hakim Ajmal Khan was not only a great colleague and fellow-worker with Gandhiji in the cause of *Swaraj* and Hindu-Muslim unity but the physician and friend of the Mahatma. The Mahatma always showed the highest regard to the integrity and leadership of the Hakim and in his memorial article in *Young India* of January 5, 1928, he wrote as follows :

In the death of Hakim Sahab Ajmal Khan the country has lost one of its truest servants. Hakim Sahab's was a many-sided personality. He was not merely an able physician who practised his art as much for the rich as for the poor. But he was a courtier patriot. Though he passed his time among potentates, he was a thorough-going democrat. He was a great Mussulman and equally great Indian. He loved equally Hindus and Mussulmans and was in turn equally respected and loved by both. Hindu-Muslim unity was the breath of his nostrils. His later days were soured because of our dissensions. But he never lost faith in his country or his people. He felt that both the communities were bound in the end to unite. Having that unchangeable faith, he never ceased to work for unity. Though he took time, he finally threw in his lot with the non-co-operators and did not hesitate to put in peril his fondest and greatest creation, the Tibbia College. He loved this College with a passion which only those who knew him well could realise. In Hakimji I have lost not merely a wise and steadfast co-worker, I have lost a friend on whom I could rely in the hour of need. He was my constant guide in the matter of Hindu-Muslim unity. His



judgment, sobriety and knowledge of human nature enabled him for the most part to give correct decisions. Such a man never dies. Though he is no longer in the flesh with us, his spirit shall be ever with us and calls us even now to a faithful discharge of our duty. And no memorial that we can raise to perpetuate his memory can be complete until we have achieved real Hindu-Muslim unity. May God grant that we may learn to do through his death what we failed to do in his lifetime !

### DR. BESANT

Mahatma Gandhi and Dr. Besant have not always seen eye to eye in matters of public interest. But that has never stood in the way of their admiring and appreciating each other's work. On one occasion Dr. Besant having criticised the Congress as becoming more and more Provincial because of the increasing tendency to the use of Vernaculars, Mr. Gandhi in a statement addressed to South Indians called upon the Madrasis to learn Hindustani as that is rapidly becoming the national language of India. In the course of the appeal he referred to Dr. Besant's services in these words :

I entertain a very high regard for Mrs. Besant and her services to India. No one has popularised the idea of Home Rule for India with so much success as she. The best of us, much younger in age, are unable to approach her in her industry, zeal and organising ability, all devoted to the service of India. She has devoted the best part of her mature life to the service of India and she has deservedly attained to popularity in India, second perhaps only to that of Lokamanya Tilak.

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## MAGANLAL GANDHI

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Maganlal Gandhi worked with Gandhiji both in South Africa and in the Ashram in India. Writing of him as his "Best Comrade" Gandhiji observed in a moving article in *Young India* of 26th April, 1928:

He whom I had singled out as heir to my all is no more. Maganlal K. Gandhi, a grandson of an uncle of mine, had been with me in my work since 1904. Maganlal's father has given all his boys to the cause. . .

Maganlal Gandhi went with me to South Africa in 1903 in the hope of making a bit of a fortune. But hardly had he been store-keeping for one year, when he responded to my sudden call to self-imposed poverty, joined the Phoenix settlement and never once faltered or failed after so joining me. If he had not dedicated himself to the country's service, his undoubted abilities and indefatigable industry would have made him a merchant prince. Put in a printing press he easily and quickly mastered the secrets of the art of printing. Though he had never before handled a tool or a machine, he found himself at home in the engine room, the machine room and at the compositor's desk. He was equally at ease with the Gujarati editing of the *Indian Opinion*. Since the Phoenix scheme included domestic farming, he became a good farmer. His was, I think, the best garden at the settlement. It may be of interest to note that the very first issue of *Young India* published in Ahmedabad bears the marks of his labours when they were much needed.

He had a sturdy constitution which he wore away in advancing the cause to which he had dedicated himself.

He closely studied and followed my spiritual career and when I presented to my co-workers *brahmacharya* as a rule of life even for married men in search of Truth, he was the first to perceive the beauty and the necessity of the practice, and though it cost him to my knowledge a terrific struggle, he carried it through to success, taking his wife along with him by patient argument instead of imposing his views on her.

When *Satyagraha* was born, he was in the forefront. He gave me the expression which I was striving to find to give its full meaning to what the South African struggle stood for, and which for want of a better term I allowed to be recognised by the very insufficient and even misleading term 'passive resistance'. I wish I had the very beautiful letter he then wrote to me giving his reasons for suggesting the name. He argued out the whole philosophy of the struggle step by step and brought the reader irresistibly to his chosen name. The letter I remember was incredibly short and to the point as all his communications always were.

During the struggle he was never weary of work, shirked no task and by his intrepidity he infected every one around him with courage and hope. When every one went to gaol, when at Phoenix courting imprisonment was like a prize to be won at my instance, he stayed back in order to shoulder a much heavier task. He sent his wife to join the women's party.

On our return to India, it was he again who made it possible to found the Ashram in the austere manner in which it was founded. Here he was called to a newer and more difficult task. He proved equal to it. Untouchability was a very severe trial for him. Just for one brief moment his heart seemed to give way. But

it was only for a second. He saw that love had no bounds and that it was necessary to live down the ways of 'untouchables', if only because the so-called higher castes were responsible for them. . . .

Let not the reader imagine that he knew nothing of politics. He did, but he chose the path of silent, selfless constructive service.

He was my hands, my feet and my eyes. The world knows so little of how much my so-called greatness depends upon the incessant toil and drudgery of silent, devoted, able and pure workers, men as well as women. And among them all Maganlal was to me the greatest, the best and the purest.

As I am penning these lines, I hear the sobs of the widow bewailing the death of her dear husband. Little does she realise that I am more widowed than she. And but for a living faith in God, I should become a raving-maniac for the loss of one who was dearer to me than my own sons, who never once deceived me or failed me, who was a personification of industry, who was the watchdog of the Ashram in all its aspects—material, moral and spiritual. His life is an inspiration for me, a standing demonstration of the efficacy and the supremacy of the moral law. In his own life he proved visibly for me not for a few days, not for a few months, but for twenty-four long years—now alas! all too short—that service of the country, service of humanity and self-realisation or knowledge of God are synonymous terms.

Maganlal is dead, but he lives in his works whose imprints he who runs may read on every particle of dust in the Ashram.

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## LALA LAJPAT RAI

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Gandhiji had great respect and admiration for Lala Lajpat Rai and his services to the national cause. Lalaji's sufferings and his self-denial in the cause of the country and his undaunted courage evoked his unstinted appreciation. They did not always see eye to eye in their methods of political and social work but their ardent patriotism and devotion to the same cause drew them near to each other. Hearing that Lalaji was assaulted, Gandhiji telegraphed his congratulations and commented on the incident in *Young India* of November 8, 1928, as follows :

"Thanks. Assault unprovoked and deliberate. Received two severe injuries but not serious, one on left chest, other on shoulder, other blows warded by friends. Satyapal, Gopichand, Hansraj, Mohammad Alam, others received blows and injuries. No cause for anxiety.—Lajpatrai."

This was the prompt reply Lalaji sent me upon my wire to him of congratulations and enquiry. Lalaji earned the title of Punjab Kesari, i.e., the Lion of the Punjab, when most of the present generation were in their teens. All these years he has survived the title. For whatever may be said of him or against him, he still remains the unchallengeable leader of the Punjab and one of the most beloved and esteemed leaders in all India. He has been president of the National Congress, enjoys a European reputation and is one of the few public men who think aloud at the risk of being often misunderstood and more often being considered indiscreet. He remains incorrigible; for he cannot harbour anything in his breast. He must speak out just as he thinks. When, therefore, I read the headline 'Lalaji assaulted' and discovered how and why,

I could not help saying : ' Well done ! Now we shall not be long getting *Swaraj*.' For whether the revolution is non-violent or violent, there is no doubt about it that before we come to our own, we shall have to learn the art of dying in the country's cause. Authority will not yield without a tremendous effort even to non-violent pressure. Under an ideal and complete non-violence, I can imagine full transformation of authority to be possible. But whilst an ideally perfect programme is possible its full execution is never possible. It is therefore the most economical thing that leaders get assaulted or shot. Hitherto obscure people have been assaulted or done to death. The assault on Lala Lajpat Rai has attracted far greater attention than even the shooting of a few men could have. The assault on Lalaji and other leaders has set the politically minded India athinking and it must have perturbed the Government.

Lalaji succumbed to the wound soon after. Gandhiji, writing in *Young India* of November 22, 1928, under the caption "Long Live Lalaji", made the following observations :

Lala Lajpat Rai is dead. Long live Lalaji. Men like Lalaji cannot die so long as the sun shines in the Indian sky. Lalaji means an institution. From his youth he made of his country's service a religion. And his patriotism was no narrow creed. He loved his country because he loved the world. His nationalism was international. Hence his hold on the European mind. He claimed a large circle of friends in Europe and America. They loved him because they knew him.

His activities were multifarious. He was an ardent social and religious reformer. Like many of us he

became a politician because his zeal for social and religious reform demanded participation in politics. He observed at an early stage of his public career that much reform of the type he wanted was not possible until the country was freed from foreign domination. It appeared to him, as to most of us, as a poison corrupting every department of life.

It is impossible to think of a single public movement in which Lalaji was not to be found. His love of service was insatiable. He founded educational institutions; he befriended the suppressed classes; poverty wherever found claimed his attention. He surrounded young men with extraordinary affection. No young man appealed to him in vain for help. In the political field he was indispensable. He was fearless in the expression of his views. He suffered for it when suffering had not become customary or fashionable. His life was an open book. His extreme frankness often embarrassed his friends, if it also confounded his critics. But he was incorrigible.

With all deference to my Mussulman friends, I assert that he was no enemy of Islam. His desire to strengthen and purify Hindunism must not be confounded with hatred of Mussulmans or Islam. He was sincerely desirous of promoting and achieving Hindu-Muslim unity. He wanted not Hindu Raj but he passionately wanted Indian Raj; he wanted all who called themselves Indians to have absolute equality. I wish that Lalaji's death would teach us to trust one another. And we could easily do this if we could but shed fear.

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## JAWAHARLAL NEHRU

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Mahatma Gandhi himself suggested the name of the young Nehru for the presidency of the Lahore Congress of 1929. Commenting on the Presidential address and his lead to the Session, Gandhiji wrote in *Young India* of January 9, 1930:

Pandit Jawaharlal Nehru more than justified the choice of the people. His address, brief and to the point, was bold, extreme in conception but moderate in expression. It bore evidence of a man capable of viewing things with complete detachment. A confirmed socialist, he wants for his country what only the country can manage. He is a practical statesman tempering his ideals to suit his surroundings. But for himself he is an idealist who would ever strive to live up to his ideals.

As in his address, so in the chair, he was strong, yet accommodating. His wit came to his rescue on many an awkward occasion. He never hesitated when action was required. His tireless energy and entire self-forgetfulness, his natural simplicity and affability captivated every one. No Government that is at all anxious to do what is right can have any reason to fear Jawaharlal Nehru. A wicked Government would soon feel the strength of a stalwart who counts no price too dear to pay for ridding the country of wicked rule.

The youth of the country has every reason to be proud of their representative, the nation may well rejoice to find in Jawaharlal Nehru such a noble and worthy son. May God's blessings descend upon him and may the nation reach her destination during Jawaharlal's year of service!

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## PANDIT MOTILAL NEHRU

Gandhiji was by the side of Pandit Motilal Nehru in his last days. And when on the 6th of February 1931, the Pandit passed away, Gandhiji was the source of strength and solace to the bereaved family. In the course of his funeral oration, the Mahatma said : "That the pyre was being dedicated at the altar of the Nation and it was not the first offering of its kind." He then referred to the passing away of other patriots : Lokamanya Tilak, C. R. Das, Lajpat Rai, Ajmal Khan and Mahomed Ali when similar scenes were witnessed. "It was no time for grief," Gandhiji proceeded, "but for joy."

If they really believed that it was a national *yagna* in which they had come to make sacrifice, then they should leave the place after taking a vow. What was that vow ? Let them take a vow to do everything in their power to achieve *Purna Swaraj*.

Continuing, the Mahatma said :

Panditji has passed away. He was brave. He was a lion. He had fought against *Yam Raj* himself. Was he defeated ? No. Doctors served Pandit Motilal with great earnestness, and so great was the courage and determination of Panditji and so bravely did he put up a fight against Death, that Doctors believed that he would be alright. That was why he had been carried to Lucknow the previous day. They had hoped that he would recover. He (Mahatma Gandhi) told him if he got well, then they would have got *Swaraj*. Pandit Motilal replied : "We have already got *Swaraj*." He had so much faith in the sacrifice the country had made that he fully believed that India had got *Swaraj*. He died with this belief. Let them therefore take a vow of *Swaraj*, *Ahimsa* and Truth.

In an exclusive statement to the *Liberty*, Gandhiji observed :

"My position is worse than a widow's. By a faithful life, she can appropriate the merits of her husband. I can appropriate nothing. What I have lost through Motilalji's death is a loss for ever.

Rock of Ages cleft for me, let me hide myself in Thee."

# MISCELLANEOUS

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## A CONFESSION OF FAITH

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The following is an extract from a letter addressed by Gandhiji to a friend in India in 1909 :

(1) There is no impassable barrier between East and West.

(2) There is no such thing as Western or European civilization, but there is a modern civilization which is purely material.

(3) The people of Europe, before they were touched by modern civilization, had much in common with the people of the East ; anyhow the people of India, and even to-day Europeans who are not touched by modern civilization, are far better able to mix with Indians than the offspring of that civilization.

(4) It is not the British people who are ruling India, but it is modern civilization, through its railways, telegraph, telephone, and almost every invention which has been claimed to be a triumph of civilization.

(5) Bombay, Calcutta, and the other chief cities of India are the real plague spots.

(6) If British rule were replaced to-morrow by Indian rule based on modern methods, India would be no better, except that she would be able then to retain some of the money that is drained away to England ; but then India would only become a second or fifth nation of Europe or America.

(7) East and West can only really meet when the West has thrown overboard modern civilization, almost in its entirety. They can also seemingly meet when East has also adopted modern civilization, but that meeting would be an armed truce, even as it is between, say, Germany and England, both of which nations are living in the Hall of Death in order to avoid being devoured the one by the other.

(8) It is simply impertinence for any man or any body of men to begin or to contemplate reform of the whole world. To attempt to do so by means of highly artificial and speedy locomotion, is to attempt the impossible.

(9) Increase of material comforts, it may be generally laid down, does not in any way whatsoever conduce to moral growth.

(10) Medical science is the concentrated essence of black magic. Quackery is infinitely preferable to what passes for high medical skill.

(11) Hospitals are the instruments that the Devil has been using for his own purpose, in order to keep his hold on his kingdom. They perpetuate vice, misery and degradation and real slavery. I was entirely off the track when I considered that I should receive a medical training. It would be sinful for me in any way whatsoever to take part in the abominations that go on in the hospitals. If there were no hospitals for venereal diseases, or even for consumptives, we should have less consumption and less sexual vice amongst us.

(12) India's salvation consists in unlearning what she has learnt during the past 50 years. The railways, telegraphs, hospitals, lawyers, doctors, and such like have all to go, and the so-called upper classes have to learn

to live consciously and religiously and deliberately the simple peasant life, knowing it to be a life giving true happiness.

(13) India should wear no machine-made clothing whether it comes out of European mills or Indian mills.

(14) England can help India to do this and then she will have justified her hold on India. There seems to be many in England to-day who think likewise.

(15) There was true wisdom in the sages of old having so regulated society as to limit the material condition of the people: the rude plough of perhaps 5,000 years ago is the plough of the husbandman to-day. Therein lies salvation. People live long under such conditions, in comparative peace much greater than Europe has enjoyed after having taken up modern activity, and I feel that every enlightened man, certainly every Englishman, may, if he chooses, learn this truth and act according to it.

It is the true spirit of passive resistance that has brought me to the above almost definite conclusions. As a passive resister, I am unconcerned whether such a gigantic reformation, shall I call it, can be brought about among people who find their satisfaction from the present mad rush. If I realize the truth of it, I should rejoice in following it, and therefore I could not wait until the whole body of people had commenced. All of us who think likewise have to take the necessary step, and the rest, if we are in the right, must follow. The theory is there: our practice will have to approach it as much as possible. Living in the midst of the rush, we may not be able to shake ourselves free from all taint. Every time I get into a railway car or use a motor-bus, I know that I am doing violence to my sense of what is right. I do not fear the logical result on that basis. The visiting of

England is bad, and any communication between South Africa and India by means of ocean-greyhounds is also bad and so on. You and I can, and may outgrow these things in our present bodies, but the chief thing is to put our theory right. You will be seeing there all sorts and conditions of men. I, therefore, feel that I should no longer withhold from you what I call the progressive step I have taken mentally. If you agree with me, then it will be your duty to tell the revolutionaries and everybody else that the freedom they want, or they think they want, is not to be obtained by killing people or doing violence, but by setting themselves right and by becoming and remaining truly Indian. Then the British rulers will be servants and not masters. They will be trustees, and not tyrants, and they will live in perfect peace with the whole of the inhabitants of India. The future, therefore, lies not with the British race, but with the Indians themselves.

You will recollect you used to rate me for talking to my children in Gujarati. I now feel more and more convinced that I was absolutely right in refusing to talk to them in English. Fancy a Gujarati writing to another Gujarati in English, which, as you would properly say, he mispronounces, and writes ungrammatically. I should certainly never commit the ludicrous blunders in writing Gujarati that I do in writing or speaking English. I think that when I speak in English to an Indian or a foreigner, I in a measure unlearn the language. If I want to learn it well, and if I want to attune my ear to it, I can only do so by talking to an Englishman and by listening to an Englishman speaking.

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## RIGHTS AND DUTIES OF LABOUR.

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In response to the invitation of the Madras Central Labour Board during his visit to Madras in 1920, Gandhiji addressed a monster meeting of the labourers at the Beach opposite the High Court on the question of the "Rights and Duties of Labour". Mr. B. P. Wadia presided on the occasion. Gandhiji said :

I think I told you last year, when I had the privilege of addressing some of you, that I considered myself a fellow-labourer like you. Perhaps you are labourers not by choice but by some compulsion. But I entertain such a high regard for labour. I entertain great respect for the dignity of labour that I have thrown in my lot with the labourers and for many, many years now I have lived in their midst like them labouring with my hands and with my feet. In labouring with your bodies you are simply following the law of your being, and there is not the slightest reason for you to feel dissatisfied with your lot. On the contrary, I would ask you to regard yourselves as trustees for the nation for which you are labouring. A nation may do without its millionaires and without its capitalists, but a nation can never do without its labour. But there is one fundamental distinction between your labour and my labour. You are labouring for some one else. But I consider that I am labouring for myself. Then I am my own master. And in a natural state we should all find ourselves our own masters. But such a state of things cannot be reached in a day. It therefore becomes a very serious question for you to consider how you are to conduct yourselves as labourers serving others. Just as

there is no shame in being a labourer for one's self, so also is there no shame in labouring for others.

But it becomes necessary to find out the true relationship between master and servant. What are your duties and what are your rights? It is simple to understand that your right is to receive higher wages for your labour. And it is equally simple to know that your duty is to work to the best of your ability for the wage you receive. And it is my universal experience that as a rule labour discharges its obligations more effectively and more conscientiously than the master who has corresponding obligations towards the labourers. It therefore becomes necessary for labour to find out how far labour can impose its will on the masters. If we find that we are not adequately paid or housed, how are we to receive enough wages, and good accommodation? Who is to determine the standard of wages, and the standard of comfort required by the labourers. The best way, no doubt, is that you labourers understand your own rights, understand the method of enforcing your rights and enforce them. But for that you require a little previous training—education. You have been brought to a central point from the various parts of the country and find yourselves congregated together. But you find that you are not getting enough, you are not properly housed. I therefore venture to suggest to Mr. Wadia and those who are leading you and advising you that their first business is to guide you not by giving you a knowledge of letters but of human affairs and human relations. I make this suggestion respectfully and in all humility because my survey of labour in India is so far as I have been able to undertake it and my long experience of conditions of labour in South Africa lead me to the

conclusion that in a large majority of cases leaders consider that they have to give labour the knowledge of the 3 R's. That undoubtedly is a necessity of the case. But it is to be preceded by a proper knowledge of your own rights and the way of enforcing them. And in conducting many a strike I have found that it is possible to give this fundamental education to the labourers within a few days.

And that brings me to the subject of strikes. Strikers are now in the air to-day throughout the world and on the slightest pretext labour goes in for strikes. My own experience of the last 6 months is that many strikes have done harm to labour rather than good. I have studied so far as I can the strikes in Bombay, a strike at Tata Iron Works, and the celebrated strike of the railway labourers in the Punjab. There was a failure in all these strikes. Labour was not able to make good its points to the fullest extent. What was the reason? Labour was badly led. I want you to distinguish between two classes of leaders. You have leaders derived from yourselves and they are in their turn advised and led by those who are not themselves labourers, but who are in sympathy or expected to be in sympathy with labour. Unless there is perfect correspondence between these three, there is bound to be a failure. In all these four strikes that perfect correspondence was lacking. There is another substantial reason which I discovered. Labourers look to pecuniary support from their unions for their maintenance. No labour can prolong a strike indefinitely so long as labour depends on the resources of its unions and no strike can absolutely succeed which cannot be indefinitely prolonged. In all the strikes that I have ever conducted I have laid down one indispensable rule that labourers must find their own support. And



therein lies the secret of success and therein consists your education. You should be able to perceive that, if you are able to serve one master and command a particular wage, your labour must be worthy and fit to receive that wage anywhere else. Strikers therefore cannot expect to be idlers and succeed. Your attempts must be just. And there should be no pressure exerted upon those whom you call "black legs". Any force of this kind exerted against your own fellow-labourers is bound to react upon yourselves. And I think your advisers will tell you that these three conditions being fulfilled no strike need fail. But they at once demonstrate to you the necessity of thinking a hundred times before undertaking a strike. So much for your rights and the method of enforcing them. But as labour becomes organised strikes must be few and far between. And as your mental and collective development progresses, you will find that the principle of arbitration replaces the principle of strikes and the time has now arrived when we should reach this state.

## STRIKES

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At the time when strikes were very common and mill-owners and mill-hands had an uneasy time, Gandhiji wrote in *Young India* of February 1921:

Strikes are the order of the day. They are a symptom of the existing unrest. All kinds of vague ideas are floating in the air. A vague hope inspires all, and great will be the disappointment if that vague hope does not take definite shape. The labour world in India, as elsewhere, is at the mercy of those who set up as advisers and guides. The latter are not always scrupulous, and not always wise even when they are scrupulous. The labourers are dissatisfied with their lot. They have every reason for dissatisfaction. They are being taught, and justly, to regard themselves as being chiefly instrumental in enriching their employers. And so it requires little effort to make them lay down their tools. The political situation too is beginning to affect the labourers of India. And there are not wanting labour leaders who consider that strikes may be engineered for political purposes.

In my opinion, it will be a most serious mistake to make use of labour strikes for such a purpose. I don't deny that such strikes can serve political ends. But they do not fall within the plan of non-violent non-co-operation. It does not require much effort of the intellect to perceive that it is a most dangerous thing to make political use of labour until labourers understand the political condition of the country and are prepared to work for the commo

good. This is hardly to be expected of them all of a sudden and until they have bettered their own condition so as to enable them to keep body and soul together in a decent manner. The greatest political contribution, therefore, that labourers can make is to improve their own condition, to become better informed, to insist on their rights, and even to demand proper use by their employers of the manufactures in which they have had such an important hand. The proper evolution, therefore, would be for the labourers to raise themselves to the status of part proprietors. Strikes, therefore, for the present should only take place for the direct betterment of the labourers' lot, and, when they have acquired the spirit of patriotism for the regulation of prices of the manufactures.

The conditions of a successful strike are simple. And when they are fulfilled a strike need never fail.

- (1) The cause of the strike must be just.
- (2) There should be practical unanimity among the strikers.
- (3) There should be no violence used against non-strikers.
- (4) Strikers should be able to maintain themselves during the strike period without falling back upon Union funds and should therefore occupy themselves in some useful and productive temporary occupation.
- (5) A strike is no remedy when there is enough other labour to replace strikers. In that case in the event of unjust treatment or inadequate wages or the like, resignation is the remedy.
- (6) Successful strikes have taken place even when all the above conditions have not been fulfilled, but that merely proves that the employees were weak and had a guilty conscience.

## THE FEAR OF DEATH

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The following is an English rendering of an article that appeared in the *Gujarati Navajivan* of October, 1921 :

I have been collecting description of *Swaraj*. One of these would be : *Swaraj* is the abandonment of the fear of death. A nation which allows itself to be influenced by the fear of death cannot attain *Swaraj* and cannot retain it if somehow attained.

English people carry their lives in their pockets. Arabs and Pathans consider death as nothing more than an ordinary ailment, they never weep when a relation dies. Boer women are perfectly innocent of this fear. In the Boer War, thousands of young Boer women became widowed. They never cared. It did not matter in the least if the husband or the son was lost, it was enough, and more than enough, that the country's honour was safe. What hooted the husband if the country was enslaved ? It was infinitely better to bury a son's mortal remains and to cherish his immortal memory than to bring him up as a serf. Thus did the Boer women steel their hearts and cheerfully give up their darlings to the Angel of Death.

The people I have mentioned kill and get killed. But what of those who do not kill but are only ready to die themselves ? Such people become the objects of a world's adoration. They are the salt of the earth.

The English and the Germans fought one another ; they killed and got killed. The result is that animosities have increased. There is no end of unrest, and the present condition of Europe is pitiful. There is more of deceit, and each is anxious to circumvent the rest.

But fearlessness which we are cultivating is of a nobler and purer order and it is therefore that we hope to achieve a signal victory within a very short time.

When we attain *Swaraj* many of us will have given up the fear of death or else we shall not have attained *Swaraj*. Till now mostly young boys have died in the cause. Those who died in Aligarh were all below 21. No one knew who they were. If Government resort to firing now I am hoping that some men of the first rank will have the opportunity of offering up the supreme sacrifice.

Why should we be upset when children or young men or old men die? Not a moment passes when some one is not born or is not dead in this world. We should feel the stupidity of rejoicing in a birth and lamenting a death. Those who believe in the soul—and what Hindu, Mussulman or Parsi is there who does not?—know that the soul never dies. The souls of the living as well as of the dead are all one. The eternal processes of creation and destruction are going on ceaselessly. There is nothing in it for which we might give ourselves up to joy or sorrow. Even if we extend the idea of relationship only to our countrymen and take all the births in the country as taking place in our own family, how many births shall we celebrate? If we weep for all the deaths in our country the tears in our eyes would never dry. This train of thought should help us to get rid of all fear of death.

India, they say, is a nation of philosophers; and we have not been unwilling to appropriate the compliment. Still hardly any other nation becomes so helpless in the face of death as we do. And in India again no other community perhaps betray so much of this helplessness as the Hindus. A single birth is enough for us to be

besides ourselves with ludicrous joyfulness. A death makes us indulge in orgies of loud lamentation which condemn the neighbourhood to sleeplessness for the night. If we wish to attain *Swaraj*, and if having attained it we wish to make it something to be proud of we perfectly renounce this unseemly sight.

And what is imprisonment to the man who is fearless of death itself? If the reader will bestow a little thought upon the matter, he will find that if *Swaraj* is delayed, it is delayed because we are not prepared calmly to meet death and inconveniences less than death.

As larger and larger numbers of innocent men come out to welcome death, their sacrifice will become the potent instrument for the salvation of all others; and there will be a minimum of suffering. Suffering cheerfully endured ceases to be suffering and is transmuted into an ineffable joy. The man who flies from suffering is the victim of endless tribulation before it had come to him, and is half dead when it does come. But one who is cheerfully ready for anything and everything that comes, escapes all pain, his cheerfulness acts as an anæsthetic.

I have been led to write about this subject because we have got to envisage even death if we will have *Swaraj* this very year. One who is previously prepared often escapes accident and this may well be the case with us. It is my firm conviction that *Swadeshi* constitutes this preparation. When once *Swadeshi* is a success neither this Government nor any one else will feel the necessity of putting us to any further test.

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## HINDUISM

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Writing in *Young India* of October 12, 1921, Gandhiji explains why he calls himself a Sanatani Hindu :

I call myself a Santani Hindu, because—

(1) I believe in the Vedas, the Upanishads, the Puranas and all that goes by the name Hindu scriptures, and therefore in *avatars* and re-birth.

(2) I believe in the *Varnashrama Dharma*, in a sense in my opinion, strictly Vedic but not in its present popular and crude sense.

(3) I believe in the protection of the cow in its much larger sense than the popular.

(4) I do not disbelieve in idol-worship.

The reader will note that I have purposely refrained from using the word divine origin in reference to the Vedas or any other scriptures. For I do not believe in the exclusive divinity of the Vedas. I believe the Bible, the Koran, and the Zend Avesta to be as much divinely inspired as the Vedas. My belief in the Hindu scriptures does not require me to accept every word and every verse as divinely inspired. Nor do I claim to have any first-hand knowledge of these wonderful books. But I do claim to know and feel the truths of the essential teaching of the scriptures. I decline to be bound by any interpretation, however learned it may be, if it is repugnant to reason or moral sense. I do most emphatically repudiate the claim (if they advance any such) of the present Shankaracharyas and Shastris to give a correct

interpretation of the Hindu scriptures. On the contrary, I believe that our present knowledge of these books is in a most chaotic state. I believe implicitly in the Hindu aphorism, that no one truly knows the Shastras who has not attained perfection in Innocence (*Ahimsa*), Truth (*Satya*), and Self-control (*Brahmacharya*) and who has not renounced all acquisition or possession of wealth. I believe in the institution of Gurus, but in this age millions must go without a Guru, because it is a rare thing to find a combination of perfect purity and perfect learning. But one need not despair of ever knowing the truth of one's religion, because the fundamentals of Hinduism as of every great religion are unchangeable, and easily understood. Every Hindu believes in God and His oneness, in rebirth and salvation. But that which distinguishes Hinduism from every other religion is its cow protection, more than its *Varnashrama*, is, in my opinion, inherent in human nature, and Hinduism has simply reduced it to a science. It does attach to birth. A man cannot change his *varna* by choice. Not to abide by one's *varna* is to disregard the law of heredity. The division, however, into innumerable castes is an unwarranted liberty taken with the doctrine. The four divisions are all-sufficing.

I do not believe that inter-dining or even inter-marriage necessarily deprives a man of his status that his birth has given him. The four divisions define a man's calling, they do not restrict or regulate social intercourse. The divisions define duties, they confer no privileges. It is, I hold, against the genius of Hinduism to arrogate to oneself a higher status or assign to another a lower. All are born to serve God's creation, a Brahman with his knowledge, a Kshatriya with his power of



protection, a Vaishya with his commercial ability, and a Shudra with bodily labour. This, however, does not mean that a Brahman for instance is absolved from bodily labour or the duty of protecting himself and others. His birth makes a Brahman predominantly a man of knowledge, the fittest by heredity and training to impart it to others. There is nothing, again, to prevent the Shndra from acquiring all the knowledge he wishes. Only, he will best serve with his body and need not envy others their special qualities for service. But a Brahman who claims superiority by right of knowledge falls and has no knowledge. And so with the others who pride themselves upon their special qualities. *Varnashrama* is self-restraint and conservation and economy of energy.

Though, therefore, *Varnashrama* is not affected by inter-dining or inter-marriage, Hinduism does most emphatically discourage inter-dining and inter-marriage between divisions. Hinduism reached the highest limit of self-restraint. It is undoubtedly a religion of renunciation of the flesh so that the spirit may be set free. It is no part of a Hindu's duty to dine with his son. And by restricting his choice of a bride to a particular group, he exercises rare self-restraint. Hinduism does not regard a marriage state as by any means essential for salvation. Marriage is a 'fall' even as birth is a 'fall'. Salvation is freedom from birth and hence death also. Prohibition against inter-marriage and inter-dining is essential for a rapid evolution of the soul. But this self-denial is no test of *varna*. A Brahman may remain a Brahman, though he may dine with his Shudra brother, if he has not left off his duty of service by knowledge. It follows from what I have said above, that restraint in matters of marriage and dining is not based upon notions of superiority. A Hindu who

refuses to dine with another from a sense of superiority misrepresents his *Dharma*.

Unfortunately to-day Hinduism seems to consist merely in eating and not eating. Once I horrified a pious Hindu by taking toast at a Mussulman's house. I saw that he was pained to see me pouring milk into a cup handed by a Mussulman friend, but his anguish knew no bounds when he saw me taking toast at the Mussulman's hands. Hinduism is in danger of losing its substance if it resolves itself into a matter of elaborate rules as to what and with whom to eat. Abstemiousness from intoxicating drinks and drugs, and from all kinds of foods, especially meat, is undoubtedly a great aid to the evolution of the spirit, but it is by no means an end in itself. Many a man eating meat and with everybody but living in the fear of God is nearer his freedom than a man religiously abstaining from meat and many other things, but blaspheming God in every one of his acts.

The central fact of Hinduism, however, is cow-protection. Cow-protection to me is one of the most wonderful phenomena in human evolution. It takes the human being beyond his species. The cow to me means the entire sub-human world. Man through the cow is enjoined to realise his identity with all that lives. Why the cow was selected for apotheosis, is obvious to me. The cow was in India the best companion. She was the giver of plenty. Not only did she give milk, but she also made agriculture possible. The cow is a poem of pity. One reads pity in the gentle animal. She is the mother to millions of Indian mankind. Protection of the cow means protection of the whole dumb creation of God. The ancient seer, whoever he was, began with the cow. The appeal of the lower order of creation is all the more forcible because it is

speechless. Cow-protection is the gift of Hinduism to the world. And Hinduism will live so long as there are Hindus to protect the cow. . . .

I can no more describe my feeling for Hinduism than for my own wife. She moves me as no other woman in the world can. Not that she has no faults. I daresay she has many more than I see myself. But the feeling of an indissoluble bond is there. Even so I feel for and about Hinduism with all its faults and limitations. Nothing relates me so much as the music of the Gita or the Ramayana by Tulasidas, the only two books in Hinduism I may be said to know. When I fancied I was taking my last breath, the Gita was my solace. I know the vice that is going on to-day in all the great Hindu shrines, but I love them in spite of their unspeakable failings. There is an interest which I take in them and which I take in no other. I am a reformer through and through. But my zeal never takes me to the rejection of any of the essential things of Hinduism. I have said I do not disbelieve in idol worship. An idol does not excite any feeling of veneration in me. But I think that idol worship is part of human nature. We hanker after symbolism. Why should one be more composed in a church than elsewhere? Images are an aid to worship. No Hindu considers an image to be God. I do not consider idol worship a sin.

It is clear from the foregoing that Hinduism is not an exclusive religion. In it there is room for the worship of all the prophets of the world. It is not a missionary religion in the ordinary sense of the term. It has no doubt absorbed many tribes in its fold, but this absorption has been of an evolutionary imperceptible character. Hinduism tells everyone to worship God according to his own faith or *Dharma*, and so it lives at peace with all the religions. . . .

## CHRISTIAN MISSIONS

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The following is an address delivered before the Calcutta Missionaries Conference on 28th July 1925, Dr. G. Howells, of Serampore College, presiding:

Not many of you perhaps know that my association with Christians—not Christians so called, but real Christians—dates from 1889, when as a lad I found myself in London; and that association has grown riper as years have rolled on. In South Africa, where I found myself in the midst of inhospitable surroundings, I was able to make hundreds of Christian friends. I came in touch with the late Mr. Spencer Watton, Director of South Africa General Mission, and later with the great divine, Rev. Mr. A Murray, and several others.

My acquaintance, therefore, this evening with so many missionaries is by no means a new thing. There was even a time in my life when a very sincere and intimate friend of mine, a great and good Quaker, had designs on me. (*Laughter.*) He thought that I was too good not to become a Christian! I was sorry to have disappointed him. One missionary friend of mine in South Africa still writes to me, and asks me: "How is it with you?" I have always told this friend that so far as I know it is all well with me. If it was prayer that these friends expected me to make, I was able to tell them that every day the heart-felt prayer within the closed door of my closet went to the Almighty, to show me light and give wisdom and courage to follow that light.

In answer to promises made to one of these Christian friends of mine, I thought it my duty to see one of the

biggest of Indian Christians, as I was told he was—the late Kali Charan Banerjee. I went over to him—I am telling you of the deep search that I have undergone in order that I might leave no stone unturned to find out the true path—I went to him with an absolutely open mind and in a receptive mood, and I met him also under circumstances which were most affecting. I found that there was much in common between Mr. Banerjee and myself. His simplicity, his humility, his courage, his truthfulness, all these things I have all along admired. He met me when his wife was on her death-bed. You cannot imagine a more impressive scene, a more ennobling circumstance. I told Mr. Banerjee: “I have come to you as a seeker”—this was in 1901—“I have come to you in fulfilment of a sacred promise I have made to some of my dearest Christian friends, that I will leave no stone unturned to find out the true light.” I told him that I had given my friends the assurance that no worldly gain would keep me away from the light, if I could but see it. Well, I am not going to engage you in giving a description of the little discussion that we had between us. It was very good, very noble. I came away, not sorry, not dejected, not disappointed, but I felt sad that even Mr. Banerjee could not convince me. This was my final deliberate striving to realize Christianity as it was presented to me. To-day my position is that, though I admire much in Christianity, I am unable to identify myself with orthodox Christianity. I must tell you in all humility, that Hinduism, as I knew it, entirely satisfies my soul, fills my whole being, and I find a solace in the *Bhagavad Gita* and *Upanishads* that I miss even in the *Sermon on the Mount*. Not that I do not prize the

ideal presented therein, not that some of the precious teachings in the Sermon on the Mount have not left a deep impression upon me, but I must confess to you that when doubts haunt me, when disappointments stare me in the face, and when I see not one ray of light on the horizon, I turn to the *Bhagavad Gita*, and find a verse to comfort me; and I immediately begin to smile in the midst of overwhelming sorrow. My life has been full of external tragedies, and if they have not left any visible and indelible effect on me, I owe it to the teaching of the *Bhagavad Gita*.

I have told you all these things in order to make it absolutely clear to you where I stand, so that I may have, if you will, closer hand-grip with you. Here is a man who has approached Christianity with prayerfulness, with all the humanity that he was capable of, with all the truth he could command, and with the fear of none but God. Here I stand and I came to another conclusion in my search. I must add that I did not stop at studying the Bible and the commentaries and other books on Christianity that my friends placed in my hands; but I said to myself, if I was to find my satisfaction through reasoning, I must study the scriptures of other religions also and make my choice. And I turned to the *Koran*. I tried to understand what I could of Judaism as distinguished from Christianity. I studied Zoroastrianism, and I came to the conclusion that all religions were right, but every one of them imperfect, imperfect naturally and necessarily—because they were interpreted, with our poor intellects, sometimes with our poor hearts, and more often misinterpreted. In all religions I found to my grief that there were various and even contradictory interpretations of some texts, and I said to myself:

"Not these things for me. If I want the satisfaction of my soul, I must feel my way. I must wait silently upon God and ask Him to guide me." There is a beautiful verse in Sanskrit, which we sing every day in our little *ashram* at Sabarmati, which says: "God helps only when man feels utterly helpless and utterly humble." Some of you have come from the Tamil land. When I was studying Tamil, I found in one of the books of Dr. Pope, a Tamil proverb, which means "God helps the helpless". I have given you this life story of my own experience for you to ponder over.

You, the missionaries, come to India thinking that you come to a land of heathens, of idolaters, of men who do not know God. One of the greatest of Christian divines, Bishop Heber, wrote the two lines which have always left a sting with me: "Where every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." I wish he had not written them. My own experience, in my travels throughout India, has been to the contrary. I have gone from one end of the country to the other, without any prejudice, in a relentless search after truth, and I am not able to say that here in this fair land, watered by the great Ganges, the Brahmaputra and the Jumna, man is vile. He is not vile. He is as much a seeker after truth as you and I are, possibly more so. This reminds me of a French book, translated for me by a French friend. It is an account of an imaginary expedition in search of knowledge. One party landed in India and found Truth and God personified in a little pariah's hut. I tell you there are many such huts belonging to the untouchables where you will certainly find God. They do not reason, but they persist in their belief that God is. They depend upon God for His assistance—and find

it too. There are many stories told throughout the length and breadth of India about these noble untouchables. Vile as some of them may be, there are some of the noblest specimens of humanity in their midst. But does my experience exhaust itself merely with the untouchables? No. I am here to tell you that there are non-Brahmins, there are Brahmins, who are as fine specimens of humanity as you will find in any place on the earth. There are Brahmins to-day in India who are embodiments of self-sacrifice, godliness and humility. There are Brahmins who are devoting themselves body and soul to the service of untouchables, with no expectation of reward from the untouchables, but with execration from orthodoxy. They do not mind it, because in serving pariahs they are serving God. I can quote chapter and verse from my experience. I place these facts before you in all humility for the simple reason that you may know this land better, the land to which you have come to serve. You are here to find out the distress of the people of India and remove it. But I hope you are here also in a receptive mood, and if there is anything that India has to give, you will not stop your ears, you will not close your eyes, and steel your hearts, but open your ears, eyes, and most of all your hearts, to receive all that may be good in this land. I give you my assurance that there is a great deal of good in India. Do not flatter yourselves with the belief that a mere recital of that celebrated verse in St. John makes a Christian. If I have read the Bible correctly, I know that many men who have never heard the name of Jesus Christ or have even rejected the official interpretation of Christianity, would probably, if Jesus came in our midst to-day in the flesh, be owned by Him more than many of us. I, therefore, ask you to approach the problem before you with open-heartedness and humility. . . .



## PRAYER: A SHEER NECESSITY

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Dealing with Prayer as a sheer necessity, Mahatma Gandhi wrote in the *Cultural World* :

Prayer has saved my life. Without it, I should have been a lunatic long ago. I have had my share of the bitterest public and private experiences. They threw me into temporary despair. If I was able to get rid of that despair, it was because of prayer. Prayer has not been a part of my life as truth has been. Prayer came out of sheer necessity. I found myself, in a plight where I could not possibly be happy without prayer. The more my faith in God increased, the more irresistible became the yearning for prayer. Life seemed to be dull and vacant without it.

I had attended the Christian religious services in South Africa, but they failed to grip me. My Christian friends supplicated God, but I could not do so. I failed grievously. I started with a disbelief in God and prayer. And until at a late stage in life I did not feel anything like, a void in life. At that state, I felt that as food was indispensable to the body, so was prayer indispensable for the soul. In fact, food for the body is not so necessary as prayer for the soul. For starvation is often necessary in order to keep the body in health, but there is no such thing as prayer starvation. You cannot possibly have a surfeit of prayer.

Three of the greatest teachers of the world : Buddha, Jesus, and Mohammed, have left unimpeachable testimony that they found illumination through prayer and could not possibly live without it. Millions of Christians, Hindus and

Mussulmans find their only solace in life in prayer. Either you vote them down as liars, or as self-deluded people. I will say that this "lying" has a charm for me, a truth-seeker, if it is "lying" that has given me that mainstay or staff of life, without which I could not dare to live for a moment. In spite of despair staring me in the face on the political horizon, I have never lost my peace. In fact, I have found people who envy my peace. That peace comes from prayer.

I am not a man of learning, but I humbly claim to be a man of prayer. I am indifferent as to the form. Everyone is a law unto himself in that respect. But there are some well-marked roads, and it is safe to walk along the beaten tracks trod by the ancient teachers.

It is beyond my power to induce in you a belief in God. There are certain things which are self-proved and certain things which are not proved at all. The existence of God is like a geometrical axiom. It may be beyond our heart grasp. I shall not talk of an intellectual grasp. Intellectual attempts are more or less fallacious, as a rational explanation cannot give you the faith in a living God. For it is a thing beyond the grasp of reason. It transcends reason.

There are various phenomena from which you can reason out the existence of God, but I shall not insult your intelligence by offering you a rational explanation of that type. I would have you brush aside all rational explanations and begin with a simple child-like faith in God. If I exist, God exists. With me it is a necessity of my being, as it is with millions. They may not be able to talk about it, but from their life you can see that it is part of their life. . . .

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## VOLUNTARY POVERTY

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The following is from an address at the Guildhouse, London, delivered on September 23, 1931 :

When I found myself drawn into the political coil, I asked myself what was necessary for me in order to remain absolutely untouched by immorality, by untruth, by what is known as political gain. . . I do not propose to take you through all the details of that act or performance interesting and, to me, sacred though they are—but I can only tell you that it was a difficult struggle in the beginning and it was a wrestle with my wife and—as I can vividly recall—with my children also. Be that as it may, I came definitely to the conclusion that, if I had to serve the people in whose midst my life was cast and of whose difficulties I was witness from day to day, I must discard all wealth, all possession.

I cannot tell you with truth that, when this belief came to me, I discarded everything immediately. I must confess to you that progress at first was slow. And now, as I recall those days of struggle, I remember that it was also painful in the beginning. But, as days went by, I saw that I had to throw overboard many other things which I used to consider as mine, and a time came when it became a matter of positive joy to give up those things. And one after another then, by almost geometric progression, the things slipped away from me. And, as I am describing my experiences, I can say a great burden fell off my shoulders, and I felt that I could now walk with ease and do my work also in

the service of my fellow-men with great comfort and still greater joy. The possession of anything then became a troublesome thing and a burden.

Exploring the cause of that joy, I found that, if I kept anything as my own, I had to defend it against the whole world. I found also that there were many people who did not have the thing, although they wanted it; and I would have to seek police assistance also if hungry famine-stricken people, finding me in a lonely place, wanted not merely to divide the thing with me but to dispossess me. And I said to myself: if they want it and would take it, they do so not from any malicious motive, but they would do it because theirs was a greater need than mine.

And then I said to myself: possession seems to me to be a crime: I can only possess certain things when I know that others, who also want to possess similar things, are able to do so. But we know—every one of us can speak from experience—that such a thing is an impossibility. Therefore, the only thing that can be possessed by all is non-possession, not to have anything whatsoever. In other words, a willing surrender.

You might then well say to me: but you are keeping many things on your body even as you are speaking about voluntary poverty and not possessing anything whatsoever! And your taunt would be right, if you only superficially understood the meaning of the thing that I am speaking about just now. It is really the spirit behind. Whilst you have the body, you will have to have something to clothe the body with also. But then you will take for the body not all that you can get, but the least possible, the least with which you can do. You will take for your house not many mansions, but the

least cover that you can do with. And similarly with reference to your food and so on.

Now you see that there is here a daily conflict between what you and we understand to-day as civilization and the state which I am picturing to you as a state of bliss and a desirable state. On the other hand, the basis of culture for civilization is understood to be the multiplication of all your wants. If you have one room, you will desire to have two rooms, three rooms, the more the merrier. And similarly, you will want to have as much furniture as you can put in your house, and so on, endlessly. And the more you possess, the better culture you represent, or some such thing. I am putting it, perhaps, not as nicely as the advocates of that civilization would put it, but I am putting it to you in the manner I understand it.

And, on the other hand, you find the less you possess, the less you want, the better you are. And better for what? Not for enjoyment of this life, but for enjoyment of personal service to your fellow-beings; service to which you dedicate yourselves, body, soul and mind. . . . even the body is not yours. It has been given to you as a temporary possession, and it can also be taken from you by him who has given it to you.

Therefore, having that absolute conviction in me, such must be my constant desire that this body also may be surrendered at the will of God, and while it is at my disposal, must be used not for dissipation, not for self-indulgence, not for pleasure, but merely for service and service the whole of your waking hours. And if this is true with reference to the body, how much more with reference to clothing and other things that we use? . . .

And those who have actually followed out this vow of voluntary poverty to the fullest extent possible (to reach absolute perfection is an impossibility, but the fullest possible extent for a human being) those who have reached the ideal of that state, they testify that when you dispossess yourself of everything you have, you really possess all the treasures of the world. In other words, you really get all that is in reality necessary for you, everything. If food is necessary, food will come to you.

Many of you are men and women of prayer, and I have heard from very many Christian lips that they got their food in answer to prayer, that they get everything in answer to prayer. I believe it. But I want you to come with me a step further and believe with me that those who voluntarily give up everything on earth, including the body—that is to say, have readiness to give up everything (and they must examine themselves critically, rigidly, and give always an adverse judgment against themselves)—those who will follow this out will really find that they are never in want. . . .

Want must not again be taken literally. God is the hardest task-master I have known on this earth, and He tries you through and through. And when you find that your faith is failing or your body is failing you, and you are sinking, He comes to your assistance somehow or other and proves to you that you must not lose your faith and that He is always at your beck and call, but on His terms, not on your terms. So I have found. I cannot really recall a single instance when, at the eleventh hour, He has forsaken me. . . .

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## A SERMON ON GOD

When the Columbia Gramophone Company requested Mahatma Gandhi to make a record for them, he pleaded inability to speak politics, and added that, at the age of 60 he could make only his first and last record which should, if wanted, make his voice heard for all time. Confessing his anxiety to speak on spiritual matters, which are of deep and everlasting interest as against purely political matters, which are only of transient interest, Mahatma Gandhi spoke (November 1931):

There is an indefinable mysterious Power that pervades everything. I feel it, though I do not see it.

It is this unseen power which makes itself felt and that defies all proof because it is so unlike all that I perceive through my senses. It transcends the senses because it is possible to reason out the existence of God only to a limited extent.

Even in ordinary affairs we know that people do not know who rules or why or how He rules, but that they know that there is a Power that certainly rules.

In my tour, some years ago, of Mysore, I met many poor villagers and I found, upon inquiry, that they did not know who ruled Mysore. They simply said some God ruled it. If the knowledge of these people was so limited about their ruler, I, who am an infinitely lesser being in respect to God than they to their ruler, need not be surprised if I do not realise the presence of God, the King of Kings. Nevertheless, I do feel, as the poor villagers felt about Mysore, that there is orderliness in the universe, there is an unalterable law governing everything and every being that exists or lives.

It is not a blind law, for no blind law can govern the conduct of living beings and, thanks to the marvellous researches of Sir J. C. Bose, it can now be proved that even matter is life. That law, then, which governs all life is God.

The law and the Law-giver are one. I may not deny the law or the Law-giver, because I know so little about it or Him. Just as my denial or ignorance of the existence of an earthly power will avail me nothing, even so my denial of God and His law will not liberate me from its operation whereas an humble and mute acceptance of Divine Authority makes life's journey easier even as the acceptance of earthly rule makes life under it easier. I do perceive that whilst everything around me is ever-changing and ever-dying, there is, underlying all that change, a living Power that is changeless, that holds all together, that creates, dissolves and recreates. That informing Power or Spirit is God. And since nothing else that I see merely through the senses can or will persist He alone is.

And is this Power benevolent or malevolent? I see it as purely benevolent, for I can see that, in the midst of death, life persists; in the midst of untruth, truth persists; in the midst of darkness, light persists. Hence I gather that God is life, truth and light. He is love, He is the Supreme Good.

But He is no good who merely satisfies the intellect if He ever does. God, to be God, must rule the heart and transform it. He must express Himself in every smallest act of His votary. This can be done only through a definite realisation more real than the five senses can ever produce. Sense perceptions can be and often are false and deceptive, however real they may appear to us. Where there is realisation outside the senses, it is infallible. It is proved not by extraneous evidence but in the transformed conduct and character of those who have felt the real presence of God within.

Such testimony is to be found in the experiences of an unbroken line of prophets and sages in all countries



and climes. To reject this evidence is to deny oneself. This realisation is preceded by immovable faith. He who would in his own person test the fact of God's presence can do so by living faith and since faith itself cannot be proved by extraneous evidence the safest course is to believe in the moral government of the world and therefore, in the supremacy of the moral law—the law of truth and love.

Exercise of faith will be the safest, where there is a clear determination summarily to reject all that is contrary to truth and love.

I confess that I have no argument to convince through reason. Faith transcends reason. All I can advise is not to attempt the impossible.

I cannot account for the existence of evil by any rational method. To want to do so is to be co-equal with God. I am, therefore, humble enough to recognise evil as such and I call God long-suffering and patient precisely because he permits evil in the world. I know that He has no evil in Himself and yet if there be evil He is the author of it and yet untouched by it.

I know, too, that I shall never know God if I do not wrestle with and against evil even at the cost of life itself. I am fortified in this belief by my own humble and limited experience. The purer I try to become, the nearer to God I feel myself to be. How much more should I be near to Him when my faith is not a mere apology as it is to-day, but has become as immovable as the Himalayas and as white as the snows on their peaks?

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